

AN EMPIRE PREPARED

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NEW ZEALAND FROM WITHIN (1937)



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AN EMPIRE PREPARED

*a Study of the Defence Potentialities
of Greater Britain*

by

DONALD COWIE

with a Foreword by

THE RT. HON.

LORD LLOYD
of Dolobran

P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., D.S.O.

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To
LORD LLOYD

at a time
when we need
inspiration

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Foreword

BY THE RT. HON. LORD LLOYD OF DOLOBRAN,
P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., D.S.O.

I am writing this Foreword in the belief that Mr. Cowie's book is both timely and important, and because I feel that work of the kind should have every recommendation and encouragement.

Mr. Cowie's thesis is that the term Imperial Defence has a wider connotation than that popularly accorded it in this country. After an exhaustive study of the fighting forces and the defensive problems of the British Dominions and Colonies, he states a cogent case for closer liaison between the units of the Empire for military purposes. Whilst not necessarily agreeing with every argument adopted, I am in warm agreement with his main thesis. In the British Empire we have, potentially, the strongest force for peace or war that the world has ever known, yet we disdain to harness that force as a working team until the last possible moment. I agree with Mr. Cowie that in event of trouble the Empire would march as one man, but I do not like to feel that the necessary plans for co-ordination between the parts of the Empire would have to be drawn up on the march. The Empire must be completely prepared *in advance*.

This book appeals to me as a useful manual for instructional purposes, supplementing works like Cole's *Imperial Military Geography*, and Boycott's *The Elements of Imperial Defence*, but it should have a still wider public circulation. We have been treated in recent years to a flood of books on European affairs, mainly written from

a subversive viewpoint by intelligent but short-sighted publicists of the Left. I have often felt in reading these books that their authors might have taken a wider view if they had previously enjoyed the inestimable advantage of a prolonged sojourn in the British Empire overseas. Mr. Cowie has enjoyed this advantage, and has returned to place his experience at the disposal of his countrymen.

Judging from the results, as presented in this book, I would like to see every man of talent complete his education by an Imperial tour. Then we should no longer find our printing-presses practically monopolized by the dangerous effusions of so-called intellectual idealists, whose idealism is little more than a cloak for the forces of Imperial disintegration. We have the spectacle of so many talented youngsters, reared and educated in the unequalled luxury of the British system, wantonly using their talents for no better purpose than to secure the demolition of that system.

Mr. Cowie's book comes like a breath of fresh air after those effusions. It supplies a rousing picture of the contemporary strength of this Empire, and the chapters dealing with high strategy, with shipping, with national service and with Imperial sentiment in the Dominions have absorbing interest. I should say it has all the marks of a best-seller, and I wish it the best of good fortune.

LLOYD

Author's Note

This book has been in preparation for a long while, and I had originally planned to append a heavy list of authorities in the shape of a formal bibliography. But events moved so rapidly during the actual writing that I was forced to abandon my original, academic intention. I am now chiefly indebted for up-to-date information to reliable periodicals and newspapers, in each case checked painstakingly against parallel sources, and acknowledged as far as possible in running foot-notes.

I must also explain that the imminence of catastrophe in recent months convinced the publishers and myself that the book should be completed without delay. Therefore I have been unable to treat all subjects of discussion with equal deference, and must apologize in advance for any oversights. These may be rectified in subsequent editions—if such be demanded!

Although the book was conceived as an entity, it is inevitable that certain passages, of varying length, should have been printed before; and to be on the safe side I express my gratitude to the editors of the following journals, in which some of my work has recently appeared: *The Army Quarterly*, *The Nineteenth Century and After*, *The Fortnightly*, *The Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, *The Empire Review*, *The Navy*, *The United Services Review*, *The National Review*, *The Crown Colonist*, *The British Empire Review*, *The News-Letter*, and *Pacific Affairs*. I must also tender grateful acknowledgements to the Citizen Service League, and to the editor of its organ *Citizen Service*, Mr. A. Spencer Allberry,

who has been very helpful. These kind agencies have all conspired, unconsciously, perhaps, to make the writing of this book possible.

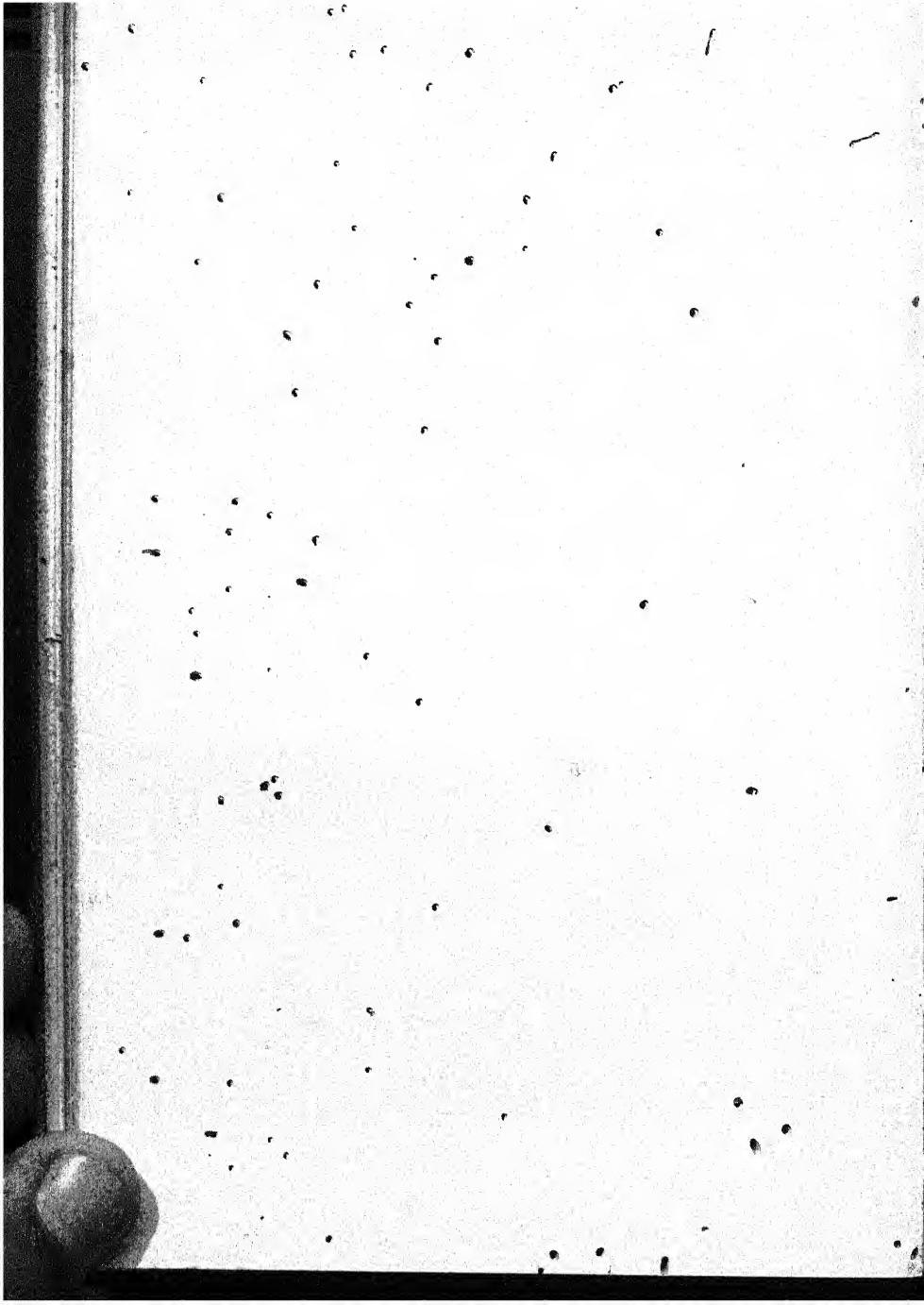
That is wrong. The book would never have been written but for my wife.

DONALD COWIE

LONDON 1939

Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
FOREWORD by the Rt. Hon. Lord Lloyd of Dolobran	9
1. SUPPOSING A WAR	11
2. RISING STRENGTH	25
3. "TO THE LAST MAN AND THE LAST SHILLING"	40
4. THE STRENGTH OF CANADA	57
5. AUSTRALIA LOOKS TO HER DEFENCES	73
6. THE ARMING OF SOUTH AFRICA	94
7. WINGS FOR NEW ZEALAND	107
8. THE OTHER HALF	123
9. INDIA AND EIRE	137
10. COMMUNICATIONS	152
11. RED ON THE MAP	173
12. THE STRATEGY OF EMPIRE	184
13. WHEN BRITAIN IS AT WAR	203
14. ARSENAL FOR THE PACIFIC	221
15. THE OVERSEAS IDIOM	235
16. AN EMPIRE PREPARED	247
APPENDIX: CITIZEN SERVICE AT THE ANTIPODES	261
INDEX	275



Chapter I

Supposing a War

I

The object of this book is to arouse some interest in the fighting forces and the defence problems of the British Empire overseas, and also to inspire some useful confidence in their strength. To that end I shall trace the growth of those forces from early colonial days, through the Great War to the uneasy present. Then I shall describe the ambitious schemes of rearmament that have been initiated by the Dominions and Colonies during the last few years. Such an essay may be useful both to the expert and to that expanding section of the general reading public which has lately found itself constrained to take an intelligent interest in affairs of State.

I purposely say "constrained," because most people would prefer to leave the consideration of such matters to a minority of trustworthy experts. The absorbing interests of the public majority lie in house and home, family and garden, playing-field and a good, rattling yarn with a juicy murder somewhere near the beginning. Most genuine writers would themselves prefer to write about two women at work in a back-kitchen than fifty international crises.

But recent events have forced even the most inveterate escapists to take some grudging stock of the unsatisfactory world outside England. If the unfortunate situation of a minor European State can bring all England to the

brink of war, frighten her out of her wits, destroy her equanimity, spoil her parks and ruin her wireless programmes, then it is about time England improved her knowledge of minor European States. Thus the theme of casual talk and newspaper article, special book and curtain lecture has increasingly been depressing and political.

Invariably it has hinged on the question of another, larger-scaled European war. What would be the British position in the event of such a catastrophe? Before Munich it was felt by the man in the street that Britain and her allies still had the whip hand in Europe, despite the truculence of a Central Power and its Mediterranean ally. Munich disturbed that complacency, but the British ostrich still kept his head safely tucked between his legs until the final rape of Czecho-Slovakia in March 1939. Then the unwilling bird woke with a start, as if impelled by a kick in the tail-feathers, and, to use the words of the Lancashire comedian, eh, what a to-do! Our Government at once began to work feverishly for a new system of defensive alliances. Every word uttered in Washington was greeted with nervous hope and anxiety. What now?

A section of British opinion has maintained for years that splendid isolation within the bounds of the British Empire and satellite States would best serve British interests. It may be advanced that the chief lesson of recent events has not been to confirm that opinion, but has certainly been to drive the British back upon their own resources to a large extent. The League system has been destroyed, our European allies are demonstrably weaker than our potential European enemies, and the United States of America, although avowedly on the side of the democracies, has not yet entered into definite

military commitments. We must fight our own battles, and, if we are wise, must concentrate now on strengthening our basic defences rather than angling feverishly for dubious diplomatic support. The potentialities of that overseas Empire at once become highly significant.

2

It is important to realize that the relative positions of the Great Powers have changed considerably since 1914. Supposing Great Britain were to be involved in another war, then the Committee of Imperial Defence would be faced with unprecedented problems. Twenty-four years ago the friendship of Japan left us free in the Pacific, while the absence of a hostile Naval Power in the Mediterranean gave us the untrammelled freedom of that sea. German squadrons and raiders were a nuisance everywhere at first, but never a concentrated menace. Supposing, then, that Great Britain were to be involved in another war.

It is highly probable that one Power might immediately strike down through south-eastern Europe to engage our hand in the Near East, while delivering aerial blow after blow at our European allies, our homeland and our vital shipping. Another Power might raid the southern provinces of our main European ally, frustrate our vital line of communication through the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal, invade Egypt, other countries of the Near East and create a general nuisance in North Africa. Yet another Power might render our holdings in the Far East untenable, hamper our vital lines of communication in that area and even attack our Dominions in the Pacific. We should need

to defend ourselves actively in every quarter of the globe.

Britain would be unable to shoulder this burden on her own. A navy and air force dispersed throughout the world would be a navy and air force deprived of their prime effectiveness. Even with her vast new armaments, the homeland would have her work cut out to defend her own shores, assist her European allies and protect local shipping. The Dominions, India and the Colonies would have to look after themselves to a far greater extent than in 1914-18. Perhaps they would not be required to send such large contingents to the basic European theatres of war, but they would each have unprecedented work to do in their own part of the world. Canada would have to protect her Atlantic and Pacific ports and contingent trade routes, and possibly meet the hostilities of a great Eastern Power. This Dominion faces two oceans, with coastlines 3,000 miles apart, and although she can rely to a large extent on the support of the United States of America, circumstances might arise in which full support would not at once be forthcoming.

To make Australia and her 10,000 miles of coastline absolutely safe from sea and air attack would cost many times what this Dominion at present spends on her defence. Yet Australia, together with the equally vulnerable New Zealand, would have to assist in the protection of the Suez Canal and the surrounding vital area, while collaborating with the British forces at Singapore and resisting possible invasion by strong Eastern raiders. If Great Britain's frontiers lie along the Rhine, then those of Australia and New Zealand will be found somewhere along the line Darwin, Singapore, Burma, India and Egypt. At least one New Zealand expert has ex-

pressed the pessimistic opinion that "New Zealand's position in case of trouble in Europe which prevented the arrival of aid from England would be hopeless." If this Dominion were attacked by a strong Power, he continued, "the Pacific squadron would in all probability be shattered or annihilated before it prepared for battle, or would be cooped up in the shelter of Singapore."¹

South Africa would be primarily concerned to protect those ports such as Cape Town and Durban which would form an important link in the chain of Imperial defence should main-line traffic be diverted from the Suez Canal. Moreover, this Dominion is highly vulnerable from land, sea and air, and might be called upon to collaborate in resisting invaders of the British Protectorates and Colonies of the African hinterland. The recent establishment of a potentially hostile Power in North Africa has complicated South Africa's strategic problems considerably.

The defence of Eire in event of war would largely devolve upon the armed forces of the United Kingdom, in so far as the former Irish Free State is physically part of the British Isles. But Dublin has recently assumed full responsibility for the protection of her own coastline, and she would have her work cut out to defend vital Atlantic ports from the attacks of enemy raiders. The position of India is still more anomalous, but here there is at least a standing army, of which about one-third consists of British regular troops. Nevertheless, the responsibility of guarding the restless north-western frontiers would mainly fall on the Royal Air Force, while the Royal Navy would be entirely responsible for protecting the several thousand miles of coastline and

¹ Sir Andrew Russell, reported in *The Auckland Star*, New Zealand, February 10, 1937.

contingent trade routes. In any future conflict the possibilities of invasion from the East and North-West must be seriously considered, while it might be difficult to afford naval and aerial support by way of the Mediterranean and Suez.

Similarly the many British Colonies and Protectorates scattered up and down the length and breadth of the world, from the Solomon Islands to Hong Kong, and from Nigeria to the West Indies, would be faced with new enemies and new conditions of enmity in event of international conflict. The African Colonies particularly would be far more vulnerable than they were in 1914, while Hong Kong, British North Borneo, New Guinea and Oceania would be open to immediate attack by a potentially hostile Eastern Power, despite the recent fortifications of Singapore, which is primarily a defensive base for the protection of the Federated Malay States and the Straits Settlements, Burma and India.

Moreover, there are definite grounds for believing that in any future conflict the British Dominions and Colonies as such would become prime rather than incidental objectives of enemy attack, not only because the United Kingdom so obviously depends for the bulk of her foodstuffs and raw materials on those countries, but also because certain of our neighbours have developed new ambitions with overseas territorial objectives. Empires are in great demand at the present time; tales of raw material sources and vast empty spaces kept undeveloped by the British overseas have spread dangerously in misleading literal translation; while new conceptions of national honour have fanned unholy but menacing flames of covetousness.

So the defence of the British Empire is not that of England alone, and the intelligent Englishman must

increasingly think in wider terms than those of local air raid precautions and the best way to construct a splinter-proof basement.

3

I think that the overseas Empire itself has a full realization of the new responsibilities and conditions. Succeeding chapters will show how the Dominions and Colonies have recently endeavoured to translate that realization into practice.

It must be admitted, however, that the Dominions have only just begun to arm themselves adequately, and that their defence policies have not yet gone beyond the experimental stage. Until recently Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand were virtual dependencies of Great Britain, that had the full responsibility of defending them. Prior to the Great War they had begun to build up militia forces, and had made financial contributions towards the maintenance in their waters of small Royal Navy squadrons.

But the Great War shook that old confidence. The Dominions learned that their troops were the equals of any in the world, but they emerged from the conflict with grave doubts as to their future security. The difficulty of maintaining communications across the seven seas during those war years, particularly across the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, had been ominous. Had it not been for the Anglo-Japanese Alliance the Royal Navy would scarcely have been able to prevent raiders and submarines from severing the Suez, Cape of Good Hope and Panama routes. The Dominions would have found it exceedingly difficult to keep up their contribu-

tions of men, food and raw materials to Europe and the Near East, and their own agricultural and pastoral producers, dangerously dependent on overseas markets, would have suffered severely. Nearly one-half of Great Britain's food comes from Empire countries, who take in return nearly one-half of all the goods exported by Britain and more than half the manufactures.

During that Great War the Dominions assisted the Mother Country, not only in the field, but in the council chamber; and afterwards they welcomed the formation of the League of Nations, to which they were elected as original and independent members. In early post-war years they, like other small Powers, hoped that the Genevan principle of collective security had come to stay. Fear was temporarily lulled, and annual contributions to the League exchequer were paid cheerfully, as a man pays premiums of an insurance policy. When Great Britain attempted to encourage universal disarmament by drastically reducing its Navy, Army and Air Force, the Dominions followed suit, until their defence forces became mere technical skeletons, derided by public opinion, and dangerously ineffective.

Indeed, it was sincerely believed by many in the Dominions that large-scale war had been finally discredited as a means of settling international disputes. Therefore Dominion Governments blindly ignored preliminary symptoms of foreign unrest, and did not bother to formulate their own policies. Whitehall could be trusted to steer a sensible course. This attitude just survived the beginning of the great depression, but fear was instilled by the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, and the failure of the League to restrain the aggressor. There followed a "Japanese scare," in Australia and New Zealand particularly, with predictions of invasion

by land-hungry people from the north. Some observers tried to allay these fears by the argument that the danger had actually been lessened by Japan's diversion to the mainland of Asia; but the sequels of the failure to stop Japan—Italy's invasion of Abyssinia, the failure of sanctions, the growth of Italian power in the Mediterranean, the instigation of the Spanish rebellion by Italy and Germany, and Japan's renewed invasion of China, not to mention the sudden British decision to rearm, convinced the Dominions that they were perilously vulnerable in both the strategic and political senses, and that they must rehabilitate their naval, military and air forces at once.

It was realized now that the Royal Navy, no longer on a two-Power basis, could not be in all places at once. The facts that 60 per cent of Australia's and 75 per cent of New Zealand's primary produce was exported to all parts of the world along far-stretched steamship lines; that undeveloped lands at home and mandated territories nearby were the object of covetous propaganda by the three "have-not" Powers working in unison; and finally that Great Britain had been reduced by successive diplomatic defeats to something like international impotence—these facts inspired fear but also determination. The Governments of the Dominions, in quick reaction to public opinion, and encouraged by the example of an awakening Great Britain, embarked at once on ambitious schemes of rearmament.

Previously the Dominions had relied upon the strength and prestige of Great Britain to protect their shores and trade routes in international emergency. They regarded the League of Nations as a useful second string to their defensive bow. But events shook their confidence in both these weapons. Not only did events force the Dominions

to think for themselves, but they also impelled these countries to a growing consciousness of incipient nationhood.

And the greatest mistake foreign observers can now make is to think that the British Dominions are materially and psychologically unready. In the last twenty years these countries have slowly emerged from adolescence, and in the last two years the threats of others have prepared them to assume the full responsibilities of adult nationhood. It is a very serious mistake to think that Great Britain cannot rely upon the overseas Empire or that it is weak. Perhaps it might be a very dangerous mistake.

I have made no reference to the question of whether these Dominions would actually support the Mother Country in time of trouble. This is because I have taken it for granted that the Dominions would give their support. The reasons are potent, but simple, and easily stated. First, the Dominions share with Great Britain a common King, ancestry and traditions. Second, the Dominions and Great Britain are mutually interdependent in their economic structures. Third, the Dominions and Great Britain are individually so vulnerable and collectively so strong that it would be suicidal for any one of them to stand apart from the others in event of war.

I shall now attempt to prove and illustrate the assertions made above by specific reference to the growth of the Dominions and Colonial defence forces, and to the strength of those forces to-day.

Chapter 2

Rising Strength

I

The history of overseas defence is sufficiently exciting to form a long Hollywood or best-selling novelist's saga. Indeed, most of the recent monster fictions from America have been greatly concerned with events in colonial defence history. A finer novel than any modern lump, the *Virginians* of Thackeray, gives an excellent account of early military organization in the colonies. During the seventeenth century our first settlements were established romantically in New England, Virginia, Newfoundland, Barbados, Gambia, the Gold Coast and on the east and west sides of India.

Cavaliers and Roundheads fought a miniature civil war in Barbados. The first known example of Imperial co-operation occurred a year or two later, when Cromwell sent a force against the West Indies, which, combining with the colonists, eventually secured the reduction of Jamaica. Therewith "the Colonies had a hand in the first territorial addition which was made to the Empire by force of arms."¹

But that was a solitary example. England's overseas pioneers were eager to preserve their independence, and loath to require help from Whitehall. The English King and Parliament were equally fearful of implication in expense or any other form of national embarrassment by

¹ This chapter owes much to *The Empire at War*, edited by Sir Charles Lucas, vol. i (Oxford, 1921).

the colonists. Throughout the seventeenth century, from Shakespeare to Queen Anne, we scattered haphazard seeds across the oceans, but neglected their cultivation.

Those planted in the North American continent proved sturdiest. England was at war with Spain in 1739 and planned an expedition against Cartagena, now in the Republic of Colombia. To the vast surprise of the Home authorities it was found possible to raise a supporting contingent in Massachusetts, New York and Virginia, some four thousand in all, who fought exceedingly well; and Cartagena was taken. But bunglers robbed the victory of pride and the experiment of significance. The troops were allowed to hang about in unhealthy sub-tropical quarters and most of them died. Only fifty of the five hundred keen youngsters from Massachusetts ever saw their homes again.

The capture of Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island, now part of Nova Scotia, during our campaign against France in 1745, has been described as "perhaps the most brilliant single feat of arms ever achieved by British Colonists." The deed was done by a voluntary force of four thousand New Englanders. Yet neither the colonists themselves nor the Mother Country cared to push this kind of co-operation to its logical conclusion. Sometimes the settlers marched with the King's soldiers in border forays; occasionally the Home Government voted the colonies a measure of military support. Our preoccupation in Europe and the colonists' absorption in the earthy business of pioneering kept the heart and hands of Empire too far apart. Added to this was the actual physical isolation of the parts. With air-mails the British Empire is still widely dispersed; but in the eighteenth century it was sometimes irrevocably divided.

Thus the most important and virile colonies quarrelled with the Mother Country and rebelled against her. The American War of Independence finally reversed the Empire-building process; and the fine defence forces evolved for the occasion in New England and elsewhere could no longer be counted among Imperial achievements, and were soon to be for ever lost to England. As a result, we were disillusioned. Adam Smith wrote in his *Wealth of Nations*: "The English Colonists have never yet contributed anything toward the defence of the Mother Country." He stated that "the European Colonies of America have never yet furnished any military force for the defence of the Mother Country. Their military force has never been sufficient for their own defence; and in the different wars in which the Mother Country has been engaged, the defence of their Colonies has generally occasioned a very considerable distraction of the military force of those countries." But, characteristically, that hour of greatest disillusion was productive of the most surprising solace.

Loyalists from New England fled north to assist the British troops to drive back the rebels from Quebec in the hard winter of 1775, so that Canada was actually born in the American revolt; and the war of 1812, fought against England by the United States ostensibly to preserve freedom of the seas, but actually to obtain possession of Canada, was "a war of primary importance in the story of the development of the British Empire; for the effect of the war was to vindicate the United Empire Loyalists of Upper Canada, to bring the British and French nationalities in Canada closer together, and to speed Canada a long way on her path as a nation."¹

¹ Op. cit.

Thereafter the story is that of the individual Colonies, and eventually the Dominions; and it shall be traced as such in successive sections of this chapter. But a word may be prefixed about the development of that important principal of defence responsibility. Adam Smith's words have been quoted to show what some eighteenth-century Englishman thought of colonies. Another critic of that day remarked that "every other nation has attempted, in some shape or form, to draw tribute from its Colonies, but England, on the contrary, has paid tribute to her Colonies."¹ But this view was slowly swallowed up in the years.

Speaking before a House of Commons Committee of 1861, Mr. Gladstone made the following statement: "I have not the smallest doubt that in the proportion that responsibilities are accepted by communities, they will be more disposed to go beyond the bare idea of self-defence, and to render loyal and effective assistance in the struggles of the Empire."² As Sir Charles Lucas remarks, "colonial self-defence was the obvious and logical corollary of colonial self-government"; and with each decade, as will be shown, the Colonies gradually became more and more capable of playing their part.

2

Canada's troubled beginnings have been indicated, but it can be reiterated that the Canadian military tradition was born during the American War of Independence

¹ *Selected Speeches of Sir William Molesworth*, edited by H. E. Egerton, 1903.

² *Report from the Select Committee on Colonial Military Expenditure, together with the Proceedings of the Committee, etc.*, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed July 11, 1861.

over one hundred and fifty years ago. Nearly one-third of Carleton's heroic garrison at Quebec were Canadians, and the commander's dispatch at the end of the siege refers, however casually, to "the mixed garrison of soldiers, sailors, British and Canadian Militia, with the artificers from Halifax and Newfoundland." That mixed garrison defeated Benedict Arnold. Afterwards the local Militia system was allowed to fall into disuse, but all men rallied to the British colours in 1812, and Militia, British and French fought side by side with the Regulars from England against the Americans.

And that was virtually the end of local fighting. Since then the Canadians have only had their Indians to deal with—although the heroic Red River campaign of 1870 was something more than police work—and the energies of the nation have been directed primarily towards subjugation of the forest and the prairie soil. As the nineteenth century unfolded, successive inflows of European immigrants slowly changed the Canadian racial composition; but it is fair, if not invidious, to say that the Anglo-Saxon strain has consistently dominated the Canadian character. Heredity and environment have altogether combined to make the Canadian like his Australian, New Zealand and South African cousins, potentially one of the finest soldiers in the world. But Canada has yet to produce an Alexander to abuse that potentiality.

However, this virile young country has voluntarily taken a small but notable part in every British war of the last hundred years, and a brief survey of that participation will complete my picture. On the outbreak of the Crimean War most Canadian provinces voted generous sums for the relief of the widows and orphans of the sailors and soldiers of Britain and France. The

fact that these two countries were allies had a very useful effect in the Colony, bringing the Anglo-Saxon and French elements still closer together. Ontario transmitted this Address: "Should the emergencies of war require the withdrawal of the Regular troops from Canada, we will in that case loyally assume the defence of the colony, and preserve (as we have done before) this country as part of the British Empire."¹

At the time of the Indian Mutiny a regiment of the Regular Army, the 10th Prince of Wales Royal Canadian Regiment, was raised in Canada, with a strength of one thousand two hundred. The first detachment left for England in 1858; but subsequently the unit ceased to be manned from Canada, and in 1881 it became the first battalion of the Leinster Regiment.

The South African War found Canadian official opinion definitely opposed to any kind of commitment. Yet public feeling soon prevailed upon the Government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier to organize a Canadian contingent, and on November 30, 1899, a single infantry battalion, eight companies strong, one thousand one hundred and fifty men, of the Royal Canadian Regiment landed at Cape Town. They were incorporated in Smith-Dorrien's famous brigade, and took part in the push against Paardeberg which resulted in Cronje's surrender. In 1900 further contingents were sent by Canada, and eventually a body of trained rough-riders, Strathcona's Horse, came to complete the tale of uniformly successful campaigning. "Time and again, up to the very end, Canadians proved themselves second to none as grim and resolute fighters.

"On the Komati River, on the 7th of November,

¹ *Dispatches from Governors of British Colonies, transmitting Addresses and Resolutions on the subject of the War with Russia*, Cd. Paper, January 25, 1855.

1900, Canadian Dragoons and guns covered the retreat of Smith-Dorrien's column, and a whole small detachment sacrificed themselves to the last man to save the guns. At Boschbult, in the Western Transvaal, on the 31st of March, 1902, a party of Canadian Mounted Rifles held their ground until eighteen out of twenty-two men had been killed or wounded."¹

Canada contributed over eight thousand men to the South African War, besides raising a special regiment in Canada to garrison Halifax and release Imperial troops for service overseas. Finally, the adventure had the effect of stimulating Canadians to take a more practical interest in organization for home defence, so that the Militia Act of 1904 raised the maximum of the permanent force from one thousand to two thousand men. The function of this force was to train the Active Militia, equivalent to our Territorials, and by 1908 this consisted of forty-three thousand men. In 1910 a Naval Service Act was passed to establish Naval organizations, although the practical outcome of the measure was disappointing.

But Canada had outlived her nineteenth-century isolation, and had definitely entered her military adolescence, from which she was to emerge so splendidly a few years later.

3

The popular fallacy is that Australia was founded by convicts, whereas actually Port Jackson was the work of the Navy and Army, who partly planned, wholly

¹ Lucas.

controlled and finally established the first settlement. It is doubtful whether any other body of men could have done as much. Doubtless those unsupported sailors and soldiers were unimaginative martinets, but it was their very toughness that enabled them to conquer every kind of obstacle and mould intractable men and environment into a working community. Therefore early Australian society had a flavour that smacked distinctively of the barrack-room and quarter-deck; and accordingly it was not difficult at the time of the Napoleonic wars for New South Wales to raise a small volunteer corps for "defence against foreign raids or internal rising."

Fortunately no employment was found for these first patriots, and the Australian colonies were allowed to develop hardily without the necessity of fighting anything but landscape and climate, until the rumours of the Crimean War again stimulated loyal sentiment. The Legislative Council of New South Wales announced that they would resist external aggression at all costs. Volunteer forces were raised in Sydney and Victoria, and South Australia passed a Militia Act to call out two thousand men. A speaker in a House of Commons debate in 1862 commended Victoria and New South Wales as "the only two colonies which could be called self-dependent, and they were the only two which contributed towards the expense of Imperial wars."

This eulogy was soon after justified by the action of Australia in sending volunteers and lending an armed sloop to the Imperial Government for the purpose of assisting the prosecution of the Maori Wars in New Zealand. It is worth noting that the last Imperial troops were removed from Australia in 1870, and thereafter the colony was responsible for its own local

defence, although still mightily dependent on Britain for its ultimate safety.

Fifteen years later Gordon fell at Khartoum, and instantly the Government of New South Wales dispatched a cablegram offering to send two batteries of field artillery and one battalion of infantry to assist the Imperial forces. These troops were to be fully equipped, and their expenses to be paid by New South Wales. The other Australian Colonies made similar offers. That of New South Wales was partially accepted, and, to quote Lucas, "unasked, of their own free will, at their own expense, for the first time the self-governing Colonies took part in Empire warfare far from their own shores."

Actually the New South Wales contingent, after spending a few months on the Red Sea littoral, was not required to show its prowess in the fighting, but they had established a resounding precedent. The Colonial Secretary of that time, Lord Derby, commented as follows:

"I could hardly have anticipated that your government (the New South Wales Government) would be in a position to supply immediately, and with complete efficiency, an important contingent fully prepared for foreign service in a distant country. . . . The desire and the power to offer effective military service in a campaign at a great distance from their (the Australian Colonies') shores, of which they have now given such satisfactory proofs, mark a distinct and important advance in their political growth."¹

The South African War evoked a similar, instantaneous response. The news of Majuba brought an immediate offer from Australia of two thousand volun-

¹ *Australia-Canada Correspondence respecting offers by the Colonies of troops for service in the Soudan*, Cd. 4324, March 1885, and Cd. 4494, July 1885.

teers. Altogether no fewer than sixteen thousand Australian fighting men took part in the South African campaign. Each State contributed its quota. New South Wales Lancers accompanied Methuen's first advance, and for the first time demonstrated to the world the quality of Australian cavalry. An Australian patrol was the first to enter relieved Kimberley.

"In a word, in the great spaces of South Africa, and especially in waterless regions, no men could be found better adapted to the conditions, in physique and training as well as in fighting spirit, than those who came from the Baek Blocks of the Southern Continent."¹

How many Englishmen realize that Australia made this notable contribution so long ago? There has always been a tendency in Britain to regard the Australian with ever-potential disfavour, but the records emphatically underline the fact that no part of the British Empire has been so consistently loyal, so loyal not merely in word but also in deed.

New Zealand has been equally generous, it is true, but has not possessed the resources to make such notable contributions. Was not Australia the first to introduce the system of compulsory military training that may eventually be taken as a model by the Mother Country herself? the first to offer an expeditionary force in 1914? the first to offer unqualified support to Britain in the recent European crises?

4

New Zealand was founded last of the Dominions, and at the time of the Crimean War was still digging herself

¹ Lucas.

in, but the infant House of Representatives at once presented an Address to the Crown: "This Colony, young and feeble, situated in so remote a portion of the globe, can unfortunately add but little to the expression of its unalterable attachment, and true and faithful allegiance to your Majesty's Throne and Person."

Seven years later the energetic youngster was commended by Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons as "the first of the Colonial possessions that has made any large contribution to the cost of a war." From 1860 to 1870, roughly, New Zealand was engaged in incessant armed conflict with the dispossessed Maoris. Much could be written about those extraordinary Maori Wars.

But it can only be noted here that the occasion did enable a colony for the first time, as Mr. Gladstone pointed out, to support the Home Government with men and money in the prosecution of an important campaign. In return the Imperial authorities sent regiments of the line to help suppress the insurgent natives. For ten years regiments came and went on the business of the Maori Wars, landing from the big clipper ships of the sixties or such splendid screw-and-sail liners as the three-skysail-yarder *Lady Jocelyn*, or that famous troopship the *Himalaya*. Red coats, spotless pipeclayed belts, glinting bayonets daily flashed about the stone-walled Albert Barracks of Auckland, while martial music stirred the dusty streets and evergreen fern—music of *The British Grenadiers*, *The Girl I Left Behind Me* and that perennial anthem of the 18th Royal Irish, the heart-jigging *Garryowen*.

Indeed, Auckland had been a garrison town from the beginning of New Zealand, 1840, and remained so till 1870, when the last Imperial troops sailed for England. As for the wars themselves, they taught both the red-

coats and the New Zealand volunteers many important lessons. They were not quite so disastrous to the shockingly mismanaged Imperial soldiers as the campaign of Braddock in Virginia, but nearly so; and the colonists found themselves faced by foemen who knew how to fight for their own country. For the first time these British pioneers had to master the bush-lore of their strange young land.

And eventually there was a row between the colonists and the Imperial authorities as to whether the internal security of New Zealand should in future be committed to the sole keeping of the Colonial Government. The campaign, although completely successful at the last, had frayed tempers badly; and afterwards the colonist in reaction actually reduced their garrisons to skeleton strength. It was not till 1886 that a Defence Act was passed to establish a permanent artillery unit and provide for a force of volunteers.

But in 1899 New Zealand immediately organized a contingent for South Africa, and throughout the Boer War this Colony sent more fighting men in proportion to population than any other Colony outside South Africa itself. A Liberal-Labour Prime Minister, the notable Seddon, was himself responsible for stirring immense enthusiasm; contingent after contingent was sent; and the total number of New Zealanders participating was over six thousand. They made a famous charge at Slingersfontein farm, "New Zealand Hill," and towards the war's end they bore the full brunt of De Wet's onrush at Langverwacht.

South Africa herself raised fifty-two thousand men to fight the Boers, and their record in the various campaigns is well known. The defence history of this Dominion began in 1795, when the Cape Colony was taken

from the Dutch. A British force under Sir David Baird reconquered the territory in 1806 after it had been restored to the Dutch by the Treaty of Amiens. In the various Kaffir campaigns Imperial troops co-operated with volunteer forces raised by the settlers. A small contingent came from South Africa to assist the British troops against the Mullah in 1903.

A full account of Colonial contributions to the South African War has been given as follows:

	<i>Number of Men</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>
Canada (including garrison of Halifax)	8,400	£ 620,000
New South Wales	6,208	391,620
Victoria	3,897	138,327
Queensland	2,903	203,164
South Australia	1,494	82,068
Western Australia	1,165	51,646
Tasmania	796	38,393
New Zealand (approx.)	6,000	334,000 ¹

To assess the Australian contribution it is necessary to combine the totals of the various Australian States.

Each of the smaller Colonies of the British Empire has a similar story of volunteer organization, co-operation with the Imperial forces, and participation in the Empire's wars. The tale of India alone would fill several volumes, but is outside the scope of the present study. Enough has been said to indicate the general outlines of overseas defence history prior to the Great War.

It has been shown how early opinion in England was opposed to the Colonies on the grounds that they did not make sufficiently substantial contributions towards the cost of their own self-defence and towards the

¹ In the Parliamentary Paper of the *Colonial Conference*, 1902, Cd. 1299. October 1902, Appendix II.

defence of the Mother Country. During the nineteenth century it was often urged that the Colonies should undertake their own defence, and the reasons given were that such a course would make for self-respect and would relieve the Imperial Exchequer of a considerable burden. At the time of the Crimean War the average annual charge upon Imperial funds for the military defence of the Colonies was about £5,500,000 sterling, and the Colonies contributed to this sum about one-tenth, or £350,000. In 1860 it was noted that no Colony, except Canada, and, to a very small extent, Victoria, the Cape and one or two of the West Indian Colonies, had organized a Militia or other local force.

By 1887 the position had altered, as can best be shown by the following extract from the *Introduction to the Colonial Office List for 1887*:

"Since 1870 the Imperial troops have gradually been withdrawn from all the self-governing colonies, and now, with the exception of the garrisons of the naval stations at Halifax (Nova Scotia) and Cape Town, the land defence of these Colonies rests entirely on their local forces. Of the other Colonies, Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Natal, Mauritius, St. Helena, Ceylon, Straits Settlements, Barbados, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Trinidad, British Guiana, British Honduras, Bahamas and Bermuda still possess Imperial garrisons. Including the garrisons at Halifax and Cape Town, the total number of Imperial troops stationed in the Colonies numbers 23,000 men, and the cost £1,816,762, of which the Colonies contribute £185,000. The various local forces of the Colonies, including the Volunteers, Militia and armed constabulary, number about 70,000, the Canadian Militia alone furnishing a force of 37,000 men."

Events take tricky turns. Members of the British House of Commons, as has been noted, were wont to

lament the cost of Colonial defence when it amounted to the trifling sum of a few million pounds. Yet as soon as they were given the opportunity the Colonies required that expenditure one hundredfold; in the war of 1914-18 they for ever cancelled the debt; and to-day the Mother Country willingly shoulders a far greater burden because she knows that her Empire can be sustained at no less a price.

"To the Last Man and the Last Shilling"

I

I recommend doubters of the Dominions' participation in another war to renew their acquaintance with the history of the last one. They will find that the Dominions gave unqualified support to the Allied cause, not only in lip-service, but also in concrete contributions of men and money, and in such deeds as will be remembered until the British Empire is forgotten.

And it is no use to say that the Dominions were inexperienced and over-trusting in 1914; that they have plumbed depths of disillusionment since then; and that accordingly they would never co-operate with the same earnestness, spontaneity and effectiveness again.

In a later chapter I analyse the precise attitude of the Dominions towards war to-day. Facts are adduced that give the final lie to accusations of lukewarm sentiment overseas. It is proved conclusively that if the Dominions are less inexperienced to-day than in 1914, they are no less confident of the justice of the British cause; that they have been disillusioned only in their hope of immediate peace through the agency of the League of Nations system; and that they would fight furiously to-morrow if Britain were forced by aggressors to enter another world war.

Doubters would do well to read this chapter, for the experience might cause them to hesitate in their raven cacophony. And they must be informed at the beginning

that prior to the Great War as much, if not more anti-Imperialistic sentiment existed in the Dominions as can be found by those anxious to find it to-day. This ranged from high controversy in Canada over British criticism of the defence forces, to adolescent assertion of various kinds of independence in Australia, and South Africa had but lately emerged from the passions of the Boer War.

Those Dominions had no desire at that vital period in their growth to lose the flower of their manhood and a large portion of their hardly-won treasure on distant European fields of battle. Many of their more thoughtful citizens had openly expressed distrust of British foreign policy. There was a natural anxiety lest the Imperial alliance should involve the Dominions in a conflict of Britain's making and designed to secure Britain's advantage alone. Canada, Australia and New Zealand were each governed, or largely moved, by the contemporary brand of Liberal-Labour political sentiment.

Their governing politicians were mainly men of the people, that is to say, men whose avowed policy was to improve the lot of the common people (and establish their own reputations on the way) by concentrating on the home front and keeping clear of overseas entanglements. These were intense and worthy but narrow spirits, who could envisage a glorious Australia, a proud Canada, or a better New Zealand, but whose dominating opinion of a more glorious, proud and strong British Empire was that it would detract from the home-grown glory and put a lot more colonial money in the pockets of English investors.

Yet these were the very men who, at the call of 1914, threw nationalistic sentiment scornfully aside, and spon-

taneously led their young countries to bloody war at the side of the Motherland.

This response was such a remarkable thing that one wonders why it did not evoke more enthusiasm in Britain at the time. Doubtless we were too preoccupied with our own urgent problems to take much notice. Or, with our usual complacency, we had taken it for granted that at the last moment the Dominions would help, and, in any case, we did not want to give the Dominions an inflated idea of their own importance. We are like that; we are still so proud, indifferent and ill-bred.

At this distant day, however, in a similar time of national anxiety, it is very heartening and moving indeed to recollect that the instantaneous response of all the Dominions in 1914 was entirely a voluntary response, made of freewill and uninfluenced volition. The answer came from overseas long before any summons had been sent. And this is a fact of Imperial history that should be underlined in every school-book and lesson.

At that time the newspapers printed a message sent to the Dominions and India by the Head of the British Empire, King George V. This was not an appeal for help, but an expression of thanks for help already promised or given. I print it in full:

"TO THE GOVERNMENTS AND PEOPLES OF MY SELF-GOVERNING DOMINIONS.

"During the past few weeks the peoples of My whole Empire at Home and Overseas have moved with one mind and purpose to confront and overthrow an unparalleled assault upon the continuity of civilization and the peace of mankind.

"The calamitous conflict is not of My seeking. My voice has been cast throughout on the side of peace. My Ministers

earnestly strove to allay the causes of strife and to appease differences with which My Empire was not concerned. Had I stood aside when, in defiance of pledges to which My Kingdom was a party, the soil of Belgium was violated, and her cities laid desolate, when the very life of the French nation was threatened with extinction, I should have sacrificed My honour and given to destruction the liberties of My Empire and of mankind. I rejoice that every part of the Empire is with Me in this decision.

"Paramount regard for treaty faith and the pledged word of rulers and peoples is the common heritage of Great Britain and of the Empire.

"My peoples in the Self-governing Dominions have shown beyond all doubt that they whole-heartedly endorse the grave decision which it was necessary to take.

"My personal knowledge of the loyalty and devotion of My Oversea Dominions had led Me to expect that they would cheerfully make the great efforts and bear the great sacrifices which the present conflict entails. The full measure in which they have placed their services and resources at My disposal fill Me with gratitude, and I am proud to be able to show the world that My peoples overseas are as determined as the people of the United Kingdom to prosecute a just cause to a successful end.

"The Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of New Zealand have placed at My disposal their naval forces, which have already rendered good service for the Empire. Strong Expeditionary Forces are being prepared in Canada, in Australia and in New Zealand for service at the front, and the Union of South Africa has released all British troops and has undertaken important military responsibilities, the discharge of which will be of the utmost value to the Empire. Newfoundland has doubled the numbers of its branch of the Royal Naval Reserve, and is sending a body of men to take part in the operations at the front. From the Dominion and Provincial Governments of Canada large and welcome gifts of

supplies are on their way for the use both of My naval and military forces and for the relief of the distress in the United Kingdom, which must inevitably follow in the wake of war. All parts of My Oversea Dominions have thus demonstrated in the most unmistakable manner the fundamental unity of the Empire amidst all its diversity of situation and circumstance."

If you have had the patience and decency to read through this historic communication—and it is something more than a formal expression of thanks—your mind will be prepared for the rest of this chapter. It is worth noting that a similar message to India had a special reference to "the passionate devotion to My Throne expressed both by My Indian subjects, and by the Feudatory Princes and the Ruling Chiefs of India, and their prodigal offers of their lives and their resources in the cause of the Realm." The Empire of King George V was prepared.

2

Yet on the face of it those Dominions were not so very formidable in 1914. That year Canada was actually preparing to celebrate the completion of a century of peace with her only neighbour, the United States of America. The total strength of the Permanent Force on March 31, 1914, was only 3,000, with no system of reserves; while the Active Militia, with a nominal strength of about 75,000, "was not taken seriously by the country at large, and hardly even by itself. . . . In 1913 the Inspector-General noted the distressing fact that 25 per cent of the officers were absent from training and half of this

number without leave. Equipment, staff, training-grounds were all inadequate."¹

No wonder the German General Staff expected little showing from the untried British Dominions. And amid the turmoil of the war's early months they probably didn't notice that a certain Colonel Sam Hughes, Canadian Minister of Militia and Defence, had issued orders for the enlistment and mobilization of an expeditionary division within two days of the declaration of war; that a great camp at Valcartier with "the largest rifle range in the world" had been surveyed and constructed in a few weeks; that by August 20th over 20,000 men from all parts of the Dominion had been assembled in this place; and that by October 1st a flotilla of 32 vessels had left for England with a first contingent of 30,000 eager young Canadians, representing many different racial nationalities, but all eager to strike a blow in the British Empire's defence.

Canada's proximity to Europe enabled her men to reach the main fighting-line before any others from overseas, except the Indian troops. Immense munition industries were developed by this Dominion from the beginning on behalf of the Allies; and Canada also acted very usefully as a financial and political agent between Britain and the United States. But her outstanding contribution was that young army of eager men. Canadians garrisoned Bermuda and St. Lucia; served under Arctic conditions in Russia; and contributed to the Mesopotamian glory of the "Dunster Force." But these were insignificant side-shows compared with the famous campaigns of Ypres, the Somme, Vimy, Passchendaele, Amiens and the final Hindenburg Line.

¹ See article by Professor F. H. Underhill, M.A., in *The Empire at War*, vol. ii (Oxford University Press, 1923).

At the very outset this immature little army, under General Sir Edwin Alderson, was thrust directly into the formidable Ypres battles of 1915. They had the dubious distinction of being the first troops to suffer the new horror of gas-attack. Yet they stood up for three days on a critical part of the line, and might have been professional soldiers of long years' training. (Even their officers were mostly untried in active service.) In the words of one observer, "the Canadians saved the situation." At the abortive battle of Festubert a few weeks later they consolidated this early reputation. Their numbers were increased during the year, and in 1916 they marched under a new commander, Lieut.-General Sir Julian Byng, later Lord Byng of Vimy, to engage in the great Somme battles, which cost them no fewer than 26,574 casualties. And thus they found their stamping-grounds for Vimy.

Perhaps this was the most notable single achievement of the Canadian forces during the Great War. The troops made an advance of six miles, almost a record for the conflict of interlocked forces at that time, and they defeated superior numbers of their opponents utterly, breaking through a series of extremely strong trench lines, and capturing invaluable positions. Thus a comparatively untrained, miniature army of amateurs from the other side of the world humbled at the outset the crack troops of Central Europe. The story is best told in Byng's own words, addressed to his men at the end :

"The brilliant operations during the last month," he said, "culminating in the capture of Arleux and Fresnoy, seem to give me the opportunity of expressing to all ranks the pride I feel in commanding the Canadian Corps. Since the 9th April, when the offensive against the Vimy Ridge began, to the morning of the 3rd May, when Fresnoy was captured

and consolidated, it has been one series of successes only obtained by troops whose courage, discipline and initiative stand pre-eminent. Nine villages have passed into our hands. Eight German divisions have been met and defeated. Over 5,000 prisoners have been captured and booty comprising some 64 guns and howitzers, 106 trench mortars, 126 machine guns are now the trophies of the Canadian Corps."

Passchendaele later was a poor recompense for this victory. To win part of a ridge that was given up almost without fighting a few months later, the Canadians were here required to suffer 16,000 casualties; but the wretched task had been set them, and they did not baulk at it. But next year they were given work of a different nature; and the Battle of Amiens in August 1918 is the second great star on the Canadian roll of honour, best described again by the commandor, Sir Arthur Currie:

"Between August 8 and 22 the Canadian Corps fought against fifteen German divisions; of these ten were directly and thoroughly defeated, prisoners being captured from almost every one of their battalions; the five other divisions, fighting astride our flanks, were only partially engaged by us. In the same period the Canadian Corps captured 9,131 prisoners, 190 guns of all calibres, and more than 1,000 machine-guns and trench mortars. The greatest depth penetrated approximated to 14 miles, and an area of over 67 square miles containing twenty-seven towns and villages had been liberated. The casualties suffered by the Canadian Corps in the fourteen days' heavy fighting amounted to 579 officers, 10,783 other ranks. Considering the number of German divisions engaged, and the results achieved, the casualties were very light."

For the rest, Canadians fought through the battle of the Scarpe, then burst their way across the Canal du

Nord and liberated over 116 square miles of French soil, containing fifty-four towns and villages and the all-important Cambrai. For October 11th to November 11th they achieved their triumphant 50-mile advance to Mons. Meanwhile 8,000 Canadians in the various Air Forces had built up a fine reputation for courage and daring, completing the tale of glory.

This is the roughest of outlines, and does the Canadians less than justice, but it must suffice. Altogether the total enlistments in Canada during the war amounted to nearly 600,000 men, of whom 418,000 went overseas, about 51,000 were killed, and nearly 150,000 were wounded.

3

On August 3, 1914, the day before war was declared, the Australian Cabinet met and decided at once to offer Great Britain not only the full use of the Australian Navy, but also an expeditionary force of 20,000 to be placed unreservedly at the disposal of the British Government. In her own memorable phrase, Australia was prepared to support Great Britain "to the last man and the last shilling." That phrase shall always illuminate the part played by this Dominion in the first great testing war of Imperial history.

The trained land forces of Australia in 1914 comprised some 2,500 permanent and 46,000 citizen or territorial soldiers. But, as has been remarked before, such figures are misleading in that they take no account of man-power potentialities; and in Australia's case the compulsory training system had provided a nursery for youngsters that was soon to yield a remarkable crop.

That first unqualified offer of military assistance was by no means rhetorical.

The offer soon took concrete expression in the organization of a special infantry division and a brigade of Light Horse. The credit for this masterly achievement was mainly due to a young officer, Major C. B. B. White acting under Major-General W. T. Bridges. Over 73 per cent of the men and a still larger percentage of the officers were native-born Australians. By masterly organization the force was ready to sail by the end of September, but departure was postponed for several weeks until a naval escort could be supplied. The powerful German cruisers *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst* were intimidating the Pacific, while one light German cruiser, the *Emden*, terrorized the Indian Ocean.

So the Australians waited for the escort—chafing at the delay—and for their cousins of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. At last the cruisers were provided, and on November 1st the combined convoy left Western Australia. One of the cruisers, the *Sydney*, fell behind at Cocos Island to destroy the *Emden* at last; and before the Anzacs¹ had reached Suez a wireless message was received from Lord Kitchener ordering the disembarkation of the force in Egypt. Thus excitements accompanied the Antipodeans from the beginning.

The call to Gallipoli came four months later, after the men had perfected their training under the shadow of the Pyramids. (They had also given early evidence of their irrepressible high spirits and moral zeal by beating-up a notorious prostitutes' quarter of Cairo.)

Russia had called for help, and a temporary stroke of genius, or aberration, according to still-divided opinion,

¹ The term "Anzac" was usefully coined from the initial letters of Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.

was responsible for a daring plan to force the Dardanelles and attack the enemy from the rear by means of a preliminary assault across the fabled Gallipoli Peninsula. Thus Anzacs first tasted fire within sight of the Trojan Plain, where such heroes as Xerxes and Alexander, Achilles and Hector had nobly striven. It was a symbolical coincidence.

Truly, the complete story of that splendid failure, as told in Masfield's greatest prose work, *Gallipoli*, has few equals in the history of warfare. Those untried colonial volunteers were set a task that would have defeated the most experienced soldiers of the day. But they very nearly accomplished it. Most experts agree that Gallipoli would have succeeded had the troops been given adequate support in other directions.

The courage of the Anzacs was superb. They attacked again and again in the face of withering fire from impregnable positions. They suffered from exposure, dysentery, lack of hospital facilities, conflict of command. In one short advance the 2nd Australian Infantry Brigade, only 2,500 strong at the landing, lost some 1,100 men. The Turkish enemy was defeated at every hand-to-hand engagement.

During one attack the Turks lost 10,000 men, against some 600 Australian casualties; and they never attacked directly again for the rest of the campaign. Here is an immortal example of the Australian élan, taken from an excellent account by Mr. C. E. W. Bean. The Light Horse had been ordered to attack an entrenched position. But times were bungled, and the Turks prepared:

"When the signal was given, the first line of the 8th Light Horse Regiment dashed over the sandbags towards the Turkish trench. Before it had gone a dozen yards it had been swept away almost to a man by the whirlwind of fire

which raked No Man's Land. The second line of the 8th saw the first wave go, and saw it annihilated. But three minutes later, when the word was given, the second wave also rushed to its death without an instant's hesitation. Fifteen minutes later it was followed by a line of the 10th Light Horse, which went, fully knowing, to the same fate. It was not till a fourth line had started that the attack was stopped."¹

That quotation fulfils the entire purpose of this chapter; it could be left, indeed, to summarize the Australian participation in the Great War.

Gallipoli was evacuated with such skill that the operation remains a supreme model for tacticians. After the flower of the Anzacs had been strewn on those impossible hills, the force was reorganized and the greater part sent to Flanders. It should be noted, however, that throughout Gallipoli not a word of criticism was uttered in Australia or New Zealand.

That Flanders campaign was no anti-climax. Under commanders like Birdwood, Monash and Godley, the Anzacs captured Pozières and thereby turned the tide of the Battle of the Somme. They earned a formidable reputation for success in attack at Messines and the battles of Ypres. Finally they drove the crack German troops easily before them in the Battle of the Hindenburg Outpost Line.

Then the famous "1st Australian Half-Flight" formed the earliest flying unit with the Mesopotamian Expedition, while the Australian Light Horse under Chauvel "played a prominent if not a decisive part in the overthrow of the Turkish Empire in Palestine and Syria."

During this campaign the Anzacs took no fewer than

¹ In *The Empire at War*, vol. iii (Oxford University Press, 1924).

50,000 Turkish prisoners, while they lost themselves less than one hundred. General Allenby wrote of these soldiers:

"The Australian Light Horsemen combined with a splendid physique a restless activity of mind. This mental quality renders him somewhat impatient of rigid and formal discipline, but it confers upon him the gift of adaptability, and this is the secret of much of his success mounted or on foot. In this dual role, on every variety of ground—mountain, plain, desert, swamp or jungle—the Australian Light Horseman has proved himself equal to the best. He has earned the gratitude of the Empire and the admiration of the world."

When Mr. Pearce, the Minister of Defence, referred in the Commonwealth Senate¹ to the "intrepid individualism" of the Australian soldier, he coined a useful and illuminative term. This quality, combined with splendid physique and a high level of elementary education, did produce an exceptional type of man. His courage was quite unequalled. Approximately 416,809 Australians enlisted in the armed forces during the Great War, and of these nearly 332,000 crossed the seas. Over 59,000 lost their lives. But no fewer than 318,000 casualties were suffered, the highest percentage to enlistments in the Empire. Little more can be said after that.

The Royal Australian Navy did not operate as a unit, but the scattered ships did useful work, while towards the end the nucleus of a valuable coastal defence force had been formed. Thousands of nurses, doctors and non-combatants of other kinds spread across the world from Australia during the war years, and the Australian con-

¹ May 5, 1920.

tribution of foodstuffs, raw materials and munitions greatly assisted the beleaguered homeland. The total cost to Australia of that war was approximately £270,000,000, and she has not finished paying yet.

4

"To the last man and the last shilling" was Australia's contribution, but the phrase applies equally to New Zealand, whose hardy volunteers marched and rode side by side with their cousins under that unforgettable sign of Anzac. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that New Zealand, in proportion to resources and population, outstripped every other part of the Empire in her practical expression of loyalty.

At the beginning of the war this youngest, smallest and most remote of the Dominions had a permanent force of only 578, and a territorial force of only 25,902; but the compulsory training system, introduced a few years before, had prepared the country for large-scale military service.

Immediately on the outbreak of the war an expeditionary force was dispatched to Western Samoa and seized those islands from Germany. At the same time New Zealand offered and organized at its own expense a mixed brigade of 8,000 men for service overseas. At first the force was landed with the Australians in Egypt, took part in the defence of the Suez Canal, and gave a remarkable account of itself on Gallipoli. The total New Zealand casualties here were 7,000, almost as many as the original force.

Thereafter the New Zealanders were expanded into a division and a mounted brigade. The division went to

the Western front, where it took part in practically all the great actions up to the Armistice, became famous for its military qualities and earned the great eulogy from General Birdwood: "No finer or better organized division served in France." The mounted brigade played a famous part in the campaign against the Turks in Palestine. A total of 98,950 troops left New Zealand during the war, representing nearly 10 per cent of the total population of the Dominion in 1914, and nearly half the available male population. At November 1918 New Zealand not only had 52,000 troops in the field, but 10,000 ready for immediate embarkation. Nearly 17,000 of the New Zealanders lost their lives on active service. This small Dominion sent no fewer than 550 women overseas for nursing.

Similarly, the Union of South Africa, for all its internal disadvantages, put forth an effort that can only be described as prodigious. At the outbreak of the war she was in process of organizing a system of national defence with a small permanent force and an active citizen force on a basis of compulsory training. But at the same time South Africa was garrisoned by Imperial troops, and had only just emerged from a bloody internal conflict. The Dutch population could not have been blamed if they had taken the opportunity to rise everywhere against their conquerors and make a determined bid for revenge. What did actually happen?

On August 4th the Union Ministry telegraphed that they recognized their Imperial obligations, and were prepared to take all measures necessary for the defence of their country, releasing the Imperial regular troops. Next, they accepted an invitation of the British Government to attack German South-West Africa. Then they proceeded firmly to suppress sporadic rebellion among

the Boer extremists of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.

It has been justly said that of all the minor operations of the war "none was more marked by picturesque and moving adventure, none was carried through with swifter and more complete success than the campaign against German South-West Africa."¹ A mixed expeditionary force of British and Dutch, welded firmly together by that incomparable commander General Botha into the first body of real South Africans, gave "a splendid example not only of constancy and resolute endurance but also of whole-hearted co-operation." The East African campaign later extended that fine tale. But at the end of 1915 a South African Expeditionary Force was sent to Egypt and France to eclipse all other records.

After successfully engaging in the campaign against the Senussi, this force, at first about 7,000 strong, went through the Somme, Arras, Ypres 1917, Cambrai and 1918 battles. Altogether South Africa contributed to the different fronts of the war over 136,000 white troops, some 20 per cent of the white male population, and of the forces in France casualties were close on 15,000, nearly 300 per cent of the original strength.

I quote Mr. Saxon Mills again: "The South African Brigade was a noble band of brothers; officers and men alike attained a very high level of excellence, not in fighting alone. Classed as a unit of the British Army, they kept their individuality, but kept it in full harmony with their home-bred comrades, and their record in the Great War will live to all time, adding lustre to the Union of South Africa." And still no mention has been

¹ Article by Mr. J. Saxon Mills, M.A., in *The Empire at War*, vol. iv (Oxford University Press, 1924).

made of General Smuts, whose counsel was an Allied asset of incalculable value.

I would like to trace the equally notable war records of India, Newfoundland and the various units of the Colonial Empire, but for reasons of space alone have been forced to concentrate on the four great Dominions.

But perhaps I have said quite enough to show that Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, however young and inexperienced, made a formidable addition to the fighting strength of the Allies in the last war, a contribution, moreover, that provided quality as well as quantity. The defensive strength of the overseas Empire at the present day shall now be assessed in separate studies.

Chapter 4

The Strength of Canada

I

The specific defence problems and preparations of Canada take precedence over those of the other British Dominions not because they are more important—it will soon be shown that they are considerably more circumscribed—but because Canada is at once the largest and the oldest Dominion.

Her military history has already been summarized in preceding chapters. A short recapitulation of this may lead usefully towards the present position.

The sword played a greater part in the early history of Canada than in that of any other Dominion. Those first years were essentially a period of hard fighting, against the Indians, the French, the rebels of the south and the Indians again. Every able-bodied man in those raw settlements along the St. Lawrence and around the Great Lakes had to learn how to hold a gun, and his own gun at that, so eventually the unique Militia system was evolved with its town companies and county regiments, annual musters and occasional glorious forays across the no man's land between precarious civilization and dark savagery.

The Militia system lasted till American Confederation, then lapsed. With a consolidated United States of America to the south there was no longer the same fear of attack. Next ensued "the celebrated one hundred years of North American peace, during which poets and

orators on both sides of the boundary coined their phrases about 'the imaginary line' with its 3,000 miles of unfortified frontier."¹ Canada felt pretty safe. It would no longer be in the interests of the United States to attack her. The Americans had their own problems, that would keep them occupied for centuries to come. There was nothing to fear from the frozen vastness to the north, and the wide oceans to the east and west seemed to insulate Canada effectively from the outside, uneasy world. Finally, there was the Royal Navy.

It was gratefully, nay enthusiastically recognized that so long as this great defensive machine continued to rule the waves indisputably, then Canada really had not the slightest necessity to bother her head about her own self-defence. The confident mood of those grandfathers and even those fathers of ours is an enviable consideration.

Yet it cannot be said to Canada's discredit that she allowed that mood to betray her sense of responsibility. "In that period, Canada's military problem was felt to be one of making some return for the protection accorded by the British Navy. The existence of a national Militia, deep-rooted in our history and traditions, fitted well into the scheme. Our people conceived it to be their duty and privilege to augment the British Army with Canadian troops when the hazards of Empire led to armed conflict in less peaceful continents than this. And Canada gave of her best in 1914."² After wisely planning her military organization so that it would be suitable for expeditionary forces, Canada was able to

¹ The Hon. Ian A. Mackenzie, Canadian Minister of National Defence, writing in *Canada's Weekly*, January 20, 1939.

² *Op. cit.*

afford the Mother Country invaluable support in the Great War; and the experience probably did more than any other single factor in her development to weld this Dominion into a united, powerful nation.

But the Great War also left Canada with some definite ideas of her own. She suffered the inevitable reaction from bloodshed and gladly became a foundation member of the League of Nations, thus finally establishing her independent international status. She began to think deeply about her position *vis-à-vis* the British Empire and the United States; and an initial result of that consideration was her successful intervention in 1921 when the British Foreign Office, supported by Australia and New Zealand, were in favour of extending the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. American opinion was violently opposed to the Alliance, and Canada considered that it might be unwise to oppose American opinion. The dropping of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was indirectly the result of Canadian intervention.

It might be interesting to explore the consequences of that significant episode in Imperial relations, but this book is not a piece of destructive criticism.

The new Canadian attitude was immediately encouraged by the momentous Imperial Conference resolution of 1923, declaring that "the primary responsibility of each portion of the Empire is for its own local defence." And thereafter Canada, observant of Britain's vacillating foreign policy, of the gradual breakdown of the League of Nations, and of the liabilities likely to be involved in the Imperial connexion, gradually developed her characteristic viewpoint of the early nineteen-thirties. Responsible Canadian opinion then concluded that the protection of their country depended not so much on the British Fleet as upon the military power

of a good-neighbourly United States. Actually the Imperial connexion might prove a serious liability, because was it not agreed that Canada would never fight another war unless dragged into it by Great Britain?

But it is dangerous to take up definite positions in the stream of events. Abyssinia fell; China was invaded; Spain; Hitler marched at the head of a new Germany; the saving of democracy was once again an urgent catchword; and now experts were actually writing about the possibility of air attack from Hudson Bay on Canada's chief cities, power plants and mines! There was strong opposition when the Canadian Government introduced augmented defence estimates in 1937, but the mounting events of 1938 created a new public opinion. To save their Liberal faces the Government apologists insisted even after the September crisis that Canada's sudden rearmament was only aimed at the preservation of the Dominion's national integrity. Of course it was! But the cat was finally outside the bag when a Government spokesman stated in January 1939 that the defence expenditure was intended to "defend the country; to protect the Dominion's neutrality in the event of the United States being involved in war; and to put Canada in a position to enforce embargoes against aggressor States engaged in a war with another member of the Empire."¹

It can be appreciated that Canada would like to be neutral in another war—who would not?—but the facts are that a declaration of neutrality would be tantamount to a severance of the Imperial connexion; that the British Empire is still Canada's best customer; that most

¹ Senator Dandurand, in the Canadian Senate, January 19, 1939, quoted in *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, January 20, 1939.

Canadians, no matter their origin,¹ are Imperial patriots; and that the British Empire is the only bulwark between Canadian moral independence and that passive but irresistible colossus, the United States of America.

These facts have become increasingly potent during the last year, and the public realization of them has provided the Canadian Government with an effective mandate for its rearmament policy.

2

Before detailing that policy and its practical outcome, I must complete my analysis of the official Canadian attitude towards defence that prevailed until recently. It was held originally that the Royal Navy provided a complete safeguard. But this view was later modified by the observation that the United States Navy and the Monroe Doctrine would protect Canada in any case, particularly from attack across the Pacific. And it is still true that while the British and American fleets command the North Atlantic and the North-East Pacific respectively, Canada is safe.

Therefore Canadian military experts concluded that, to quote the authoritative words of Professor Scott, "by providing herself with coastal defences well within her capacity to maintain, Canada can defend herself against any scale of attack which can reasonably be anticipated at the present time without having to rely upon other

¹ During the September crisis the town of Kitchener (Ontario) that had enthusiastically changed its original name of Berlin during the Great War, and that has a predominantly German population, officially prohibited the display of photographs of Herr Hitler, and of swastika flags.

people's aid."¹ The final sentence is ambiguous, but it certainly doesn't mean that Canada could dispense with her naval friends.

This view was essentially the product of the wave of pure isolationism that swept over the North American continent a few years ago. Canadians believed hopefully that their country was well outside the reach of potential aggressors. The Prime Minister, Mr. Mackenzie King, summarized the views of the majority of thinking Canadians when he made the following statement in the House of Commons last year:

"If we are unlikely of our own motion to take part in wars of conquest or wars of crusade, it is equally unlikely that at the moment, with the world as it is to-day, any other country will single out Canada for attack. The talk which one sometimes hears of aggressor countries planning to invade Canada and seize those tempting resources of ours is, to say the least, premature. It ignores our neighbours and our lack of neighbours; it ignores the strategic and transportation difficulties of trans-oceanic invasion; it ignores the vital fact that every aggressor has not only potential objects of its ambition many thousands of miles nearer which would be the object of any attack, but potential and actual rivals near at hand whom it could not disregard by launching fantastic expeditions across half the world. At present danger of attack upon Canada is minor in degree and second-hand in origin. It is against chance shots that we need immediately to defend ourselves. The truth of this is recognized in every country. What may develop no one can say."²

That is very true—no one *can* say. Six months after that speech it is possible that Mr. King was grateful for

¹ In *Canada Today* (Oxford University Press, Toronto, 1938).

² Canada, *House of Commons Debates* (unrevised), May 24, 1938.

his own qualification. And it is worth remembering that only a year before, when he returned from the 1937 Imperial Conference, the Canadian Prime Minister had made another speech, containing the significant passage:

"Never imagine that to the overpopulated countries and under-nourished people of other continents, the countless attractions and limitless possibilities of Canada are unknown, or that, in some world holocaust, our country would escape the 'terror by night' or 'the arrow that flieth by day.'"¹

Obviously the explanation is that Mr. King's visit to Europe had opened his eyes, but a year at home had closed them again. To appreciate the overseas attitude towards foreign affairs it is necessary to live overseas. Even fast air services and the wireless have not destroyed the inherent spiritual isolation of these distant, fortunate countries. Overseas Britons have always believed in their hearts that the affairs of the Old World need not trouble them.

A characteristic manifestation of this profound belief, product of isolation, is the trade policy of certain Dominions. It is honestly believed in these countries that a nation may become economically self-sufficient; and these are always the very Dominions that depend most on overseas markets. The policy is repeatedly adopted of rebuking a customer who does not buy so much from as he sells to them.

Therefore Canadian military experts observed a few years ago that their country possessed excellent geographical defences, to wit, 3,000 miles of Atlantic and 4,000 miles of Pacific coastlines, and that these lent themselves peculiarly to control by

¹ *Crown and Commonwealth* (Ottawa, King's Printer, 1937).

a skeleton force of defenders. The military experts agreed that the most to be expected was "minor attacks by combined sea, land and air forces, to destroy something of strategic or commercial value, or to secure an advanced base of operations, and this applies to coasts, to focal sea areas, to the preservation of Canadian neutrality," and also to "sporadic hit and run raids by light cruisers or submarines to destroy our main ports and focal areas."¹

And it must be admitted that, acting on this view, Canada was careful to improve her coastal defences. The main features of this preparation were the establishment of fixed coastal batteries and anti-aircraft defences at such vital points as Halifax and Sydney on the Atlantic, and Vancouver and Esquimalt on the Pacific, while sea and air forces capable of searching out and destroying raiders were planned alongside supporting infantry units.

Moreover, it can still be said that Canada is fully capable of looking after herself—unless she intervenes in Europe or elsewhere on behalf of the British Commonwealth or the League of Nations. But that is the crucial point. Would Canada have to intervene?

It would not so much be a question of intervening as of going with the tide, and all responsible Canadians, even when they dislike the prospect intensely and disapprove of it heartily, are, at last fully cognisant of the fact. The change has taken place in the last year, if not in the last few months, and has been directly occasioned by the policy of Nazi Germany on the one hand, and by the change in United States foreign policy on the other. Suddenly Canada has realized that

¹ The Hon. Ian Mackenzie, *House of Commons Debates* (unrevised), March 24, 1938.

she is not isolated; that she forms an integral part of a world system; and that, if the system were embroiled in war, she would willy-nilly be involved. And fortunately Canadians, not being ostriches, have been quick to abandon their original position, and to alter the slant of their defence policy.

3

The same Minister of National Defence who feared only minor attacks last year wrote in January 1939 that "invulnerability from overseas attack has now been dissipated by modern invention," that "to-day not only must the Militia (the Army) be re-equipped with modern weapons, but we have to develop naval and air arms as well," and that "recent changes in Canada's defence policy represent something more than a mere change in governmental attitude. They constitute a recognition of fundamental and far-reaching changes in the whole position of our country."¹

To-day Canada is organized into eleven military districts, each under a Commander and his district staff. The Militia is classified as active and reserve, and the active is subdivided into permanent and non-permanent forces. The Permanent Force consists of fourteen regiments and corps of all arms of the service, with an authorized establishment limited, at the time of writing, to 10,000, but the actual strength in 1938 was about 4,000. The Non-Permanent Active Militia is made up of cavalry, artillery, engineer, machine-gun, signal, infantry and other corps. The total establishment of the Canadian Non-Permanent Active Militia at the time

¹ The Hon. Ian Mackenzie, in *Canada's Weekly*, January 20, 1939.

of writing was 7,015 officers and 78,967 other ranks. There is a paper Reserve Militia consisting of such units as may be named by the Governor-General in Council.¹

All male inhabitants of Canada, of the age of eighteen years and upwards and, under sixty, not exempt or disqualified by law, and being British subjects, are liable to service in the Militia. The reserve of the Active Militia consists of (1) reserve regimental depots; (2) corps reserves and corps reserve lists of the Non-Permanent Active Militia; and (3) reserve of officers.

But the present military strength of Canada can scarcely be gauged from this bald official description. During the September crisis it was announced that Major-General T. V. Anderson, who had been listed to become Chief of the General Staff in 1939, was assuming the command immediately; and as a result the Militia has already been reorganized into formations appropriate to modern mechanized warfare. For instance, an anti-aircraft battery, the first of its kind on Canadian soil, was formed in November 1938. This has a personnel of six officers and ninety other ranks, drawn from the Second Montreal Regiment, and, with a survey company of seventeen officers and one hundred other ranks, is now stationed at Montreal. Then a system of fortifications has been constructed on the Pacific, "making Victoria (the advance defending post for the important metropolis and railhead at Vancouver) one of the half-dozen best defended cities in the world. A similar plan has been drawn up for the Atlantic."²

The Canadian naval forces consisted at the time of writing of four destroyers and a number of mine-

¹ According to the *Canadian Official Handbook*, 1938 (Ottawa, Dominion Bureau of Statistics).

² The Hon. Ian Mackenzie in *Canada's Weekly*, January 20, 1939.

sweepers, manned by a total personnel of 119 officers and 1,462 ratings, with a volunteer reserve of 77 officers and 1,344 ratings. But these forces are also in process of extensive reorganization. Two new destroyers are on order, and eventually four will be based on Esquimalt, the Pacific coast, and two on Halifax, the Atlantic coast. Since a call to the colours on February 1, 1939, over two hundred men of the British Columbia Fishermen's Reserve, organized to watch for enemy raiders, landing parties, submarines or minelayers, have been training intensively at Esquimalt. Recently four new minesweepers have been constructed—a pioneer effort in naval construction in Canadian shipyards. Then Canada is under contractual agreement with Great Britain to permit the use of these bases by the Royal Navy, and has always co-ordinated her training and equipment with British practices.

The latest news is that the Canadian Government is planning to establish a fleet of fast motor torpedo boats similar to those adopted by the Royal Navy, which will be concentrated on the Atlantic coast, especially in the vicinity of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Finally, much public interest has been shown in the question of co-operation in naval defence between Canada and the United States. Although Mr. Mackenzie King has stated that "no commitments have been undertaken by either country, but close contact is being maintained," it is the opinion of reliable observers that tactical plans have been formed "along the lines of ensuring the greatest possible security for the North American continent. . . . The United States Fleet would keep a watchful eye on Canadian waters."¹

The Royal Canadian Air Force is classified as active

¹ The *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, February 6, 1939.

and reserve, the active Air Force being subdivided into permanent and non-permanent. The Force controls and administers all air training and operations, and carries out certain operations on behalf of other Government departments. But it can be said that the training of the Force for military purposes did not begin in earnest until last year. Previously it had been employed chiefly on civil duties such as forest protection patrols and aerial surveys. But recently the Force has been doubled in personnel strength, and at the time of writing the manufacture in Canada of more than two hundred aircraft of the latest types for modern conditions was nearly complete.

Late last year the Canadian Air Force was reorganized into three commands: A Training Command, with headquarters at Toronto; an Eastern Command, with headquarters at Halifax; and a Western Command. An aerodrome was recently being established on Anticosti Island in the St. Lawrence River as the first step in the establishment of a series of defence posts against invasion from the Atlantic. This island commands the Eastern entrance into Canada.¹ On December 31, 1938, the strength of the Royal Canadian Air Force was 253 officers and 1,829 airmen (permanent) and 87 officers and 820 airmen (non-permanent).

So far as is possible the equipment and training of the Force follows the example of the Royal Air Force, and there has been considerable interchange of personnel. A most important and progressive step has lately been taken, the Force being placed directly under the Senior Air Force Officer (at the time of writing Air Commodore G. M. Croil, A.F.C.) and withdrawn from the control of the Chief of the General Staff.²

¹ See *Flight*, February 23, 1939.

² *Op. cit.*

But perhaps the most significant advance in Canadian rearmament has concerned supply. As this involves the manufacture of aircraft in the Dominion, the question is dealt with elsewhere,¹ but considerable progress has been made with the manufacture in Canada of modern light machine-guns—after some preliminary controversy, not untinged with scandal—and of such equipment as searchlights of the latest type for anti-aircraft defence. Canada has never had a heavy arms industry, and obtained most of her weapons from British arsenals during the Great War. But the Government is now seeking to develop Canada's own industrial capacity for the production of defence equipment; and, although most of the heavy materials are still being obtained from Britain—after the usual delay—it is believed that before long this Dominion will be practically self-supporting in supply.

4

These preparations reveal the change in Canadian defence policy more surely than a hundred ministerial statements, especially when politicians have to save their faces. By the time these words are in print Canada may have committed herself still more deeply, for it was announced in the speech from the Throne, read by Lord Tweedsmuir at the opening of the 1939 session of the Canadian Parliament, that a further heavy increase would be made in defence expenditure during this year.

"The uncertainties of the future and the conditions of modern warfare," said the Governor-General, "make it imperative that Canada's defences should be materially

¹ See Chapter 14.

strengthened."¹ The precise figure was not stated, but it is probable that Canada will spend at least £10,000,000 on her defence services this year, as compared with £6,552,000 in 1938. This speech also contained the first announcement that the Government intended to create a Defence Purchasing Board, "to purchase equipment, and, where private manufacture was necessary, ensure profits fair and reasonable and protect public interests."

The Prime Minister, Mr. Mackenzie King, himself admitted in the Ottawa House of Commons on March 16th that defence experts had described the Dominion's rearmament programme as inadequate. "They have told us that what we have brought down in this House at the present time is not adequate at all for the situation as they see it," he continued.

But the crucial statement of policy had been made by Mr. King two months before that, when he especially recalled a speech by Sir Wilfrid Laurier in 1910. Laurier then said: "If England is at war we are at war." This, Mr. King continued, was an expression of Liberal policy as accepted before, and "he wished to offer it as a statement of the Liberal policy as it was to-day and would continue under the Liberal administration."² Mr. Lacroix, a French-Canadian Liberal, addressing the House, later declared that the best way to save Canada from immersion in another war was to make her an independent kingdom and proclaim her neutrality. This policy, however, found but few supporters, and the Address, the longest in recent years, was adopted.

The significant fact is that Canada has again taken her place beside the arming countries of the British Empire. She fought heroically for her very existence in

¹ The *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, January 13, 1939.

² See *The Empire Review*, March 1939.

the early days; enjoyed the full measure of that Victorian peace; gave unstintingly of her valour in the Great War; suffered the inevitable reaction of war-weariness and self-protective isolationism; and now Canada is awake once more. Her present Government is Liberal, and to a certain extent anti-Imperialist, but facts override sentiments, and Canada is now rearming. She intends not only to protect herself but also to take her share of the responsibilities involved in membership of the society of nations.

The new realistic mood of Canada has shaken some shibboleths in recent months. The Ontario Legislature recently passed a resolution petitioning the Canadian Government to conscript wealth and man-power in the event of war. The following statement was made by a Canadian delegate to the Conference on British Commonwealth Relations, held at Sydney last year:

"There is no sound basis for supposing that where the national interests of the United States may be deemed to run counter to any position taken by Canada the American Government will play its own hands any less shrewdly when dealing directly with Canadian authority than was its wont when the negotiation of Canada's case was still in Britain's hands. . . . Canada, then, has continued need of a genuine Commonwealth connexion, sufficiently vital to cause opinion in the United States to take it for granted as an essential accompaniment of Canadian nationality."¹

It is also interesting to note the views expressed by Canadian experts at this Conference on the type of contributions that Canada could best make to Imperial defence. One authority considered that the most useful contribution would be "a force of up-to-date combat

¹ Quoted in *The British Commonwealth and the Future*, edited by H. V. Hodson (Oxford University Press, London, 1939).

planes manned by trained pilots—exactly the type of force, incidentally, that we have suggested is most applicable to her own local defence.” Another proposal was for “the mobilization of Canadian industry for the production of munitions, not gradually and by degrees, but on the largest scale and at the very outset of hostilities.”¹

The Canadian Prime Minister warned his countrymen that they would be unlikely to escape “the terror by night” or “the arrow that flieth by day,” and it has also been noted that he considered the possibility of “some world holocaust.” And that is the position facing the thoughtful Canadian to-day. Should the civilized world dissolve in war, then Canada, as an integral part of the civilized world, would be involved; and therefore Canada cannot afford to remain defenceless.

¹ Op. cit.

Chapter 5

Australia Looks to Her Defences

I

Australia's realization of her extreme vulnerability did not take definite shape until 1934. Since the beginning of the present century this Dominion has suffered from periodical war scares. Kitchener visited Australia in pre-war years, and his strictures were responsible for a national movement to improve defences. The Great War enabled the Dominion to test her youthful strength and to acquire new weapons; but a policy of systematic armament was not adopted until the advent of the powerful United Australia Government under Mr. J. A. Lyons in 1931, and was not put into operation until three years after that. But by June 30, 1937, the conclusion of what had become known as the Three Years' Programme, excellent progress had been made.

Expenditure on defence purposes during that period had amounted to £22,000,000. The Australian Squadron of the Royal Navy, including three modern cruisers, the *Sydney*, *Canberra* and the *Australia*, had been increased from four ships to nine, and its personnel from 3,167 officers and men to 4,290. The permanent military forces had been increased from 1,550 officers and men to 2,300, and the militia from 27,000 to 35,000. The number of first-line aircraft had been greatly increased, and the personnel of the Royal Australian Air Force had been doubled and had reached a total of 2,000 officers and men. Coastal defences had been streng-

thened, mainly by the installation of 9·2-inch guns at Sydney, Brisbane, Rottneſt Island and Albany (Western Australia). A permanent garrison had been eſtabliſhed at the vital little port of Darwin, in the Northern Territory.

The Australian Defence Eſtimates for 1937-38 were introduced in the Federal Houſe of Representatives on September 8, 1937, by the Miniſter for Defence (then Sir Archdale Parkhill). They provided for a total expenditure of £11,531,000, compared with an average of £7,600,000 per year during the previous three years. 'This financial provision has never been equalled nor the purpoſes of the expenditure more unanimately endorsed by expert opinion,' ſaid the Prime Miniſter, Mr. Lyons; and a ſurvey of the purpoſes for which that money was earmarked certainly indicates that Australia had at laſt taken her reſponſibilities ſeriously.

2

No leſs than a third of the Eſtimates were aſſigned to the Navy. The ſame number of ſhips were to be in commiſſion as during the previous year, three cruisers, one flotilla leader and two deſtroyers, two ſloops and one ſurvey ſhip; but conſiderable ſums were to be ſpent on increaſing the eſſectiveneneſs of exiſting units. In accordance with the Admiralty's deciſion to increaſe the armour protection of the 8-inch gun cruisers in the Royal Navy, H.M.A.S. *Australia* and *Canberra* were to be ſimilarly armoured, the work to be undertaken at the Cockatoo Island Dockyard. The ſeaplane carrier *Albatroſs* was to be recommiſſioned to provide expe-

rience for the Fleet Air Co-operation Squadron, while modern and additional anti-aircraft guns and control arrangements were to be provided for the cruisers. H.M.A.S. *Adelaide* was to be converted into an oil-burning ship at a cost of between £50,000 and £60,000, saving the cost of a new cruiser (about £2,750,000).

Substantial provision was made in the Estimates for local seaward defences, to strengthen the security of ports against attacks by submarines and minelayers. Special equipment, buildings at the various ports for its storage, an anti-submarine school, and a certain number of specialist personnel were to be provided, and three local seaward defence vessels to be constructed at Cockatoo Island Dockyard. Altogether £500,000 was to be spent in the immediate future for cruiser reconstruction and the seaward defence vessels at the local dockyard, and this, it was considered, would provide a useful stimulus to the local shipbuilding industry. Then powerful wireless stations for communication purposes with warships and shipping in waters to the north of Australia, the East Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean were to be erected at Darwin and Canberra. Recently constructed naval oil tanks at Sydney were to be filled at once, and provision made for further work on improving naval berthing facilities and modern workshops at this port. The seagoing personnel of the squadron was to be increased by 201 for the local seaward defences and wireless stations, bringing the total number to 4,491.

It was significant of modern Australian defence policy that so much should be devoted to naval purposes in the new Estimates. The Australian Government is firmly convinced of the necessity of protecting the Dominion's seaborne trade, and the wisdom of this policy is shown

by the fact that Australia exports produce and goods valued at nearly £300,000,000 annually. This trade is conducted on an international basis with every country of importance in the world; and Australia is fully aware of her dependence for the integrity of her commerce on the presence at Singapore of a fleet adequate to give security to Pacific sea communications.

Mr. Lyons himself was convinced that such a fleet would "provide a threat to the communications of the enemy from any part of the world bent upon the invasion of Australia, and either deter him from aggression or be able to defeat him should he undertake such an operation."¹ An adequate fleet would proceed to Singapore in an emergency, and such a fleet does actually exist, so that, if Australia provided strong coastal and short-range defences, her position in the event of war would be satisfactory:

"A condition essential for an aggressor to invade Australia is an assurance of command of the seeline of communication for a sufficient period to enable his object to be achieved. With the British Fleet in existence, even on the other side of the world, he cannot be certain of being allowed time to complete his operations or of not being confronted with a superior naval force. Should he accept the time risks involved, our Navy, Army and Air Force furnish us with the means to resist him until help is forthcoming."²

From these premises the Australian Government argues rightly that the Dominion has a real and vital interest in Imperial navy defence as the first line of defence against possible invasion. Not only the important overseas trade but also coastal trade, of which the volume is slightly larger, depend upon naval

¹ Federal *Parliamentary Debates*, August 24, 1937.

² Op. cit.

supremacy, and it is beyond all things essential that the Royal Australian Navy be maintained at a strength that is "an effective and fair contribution to Empire naval defence."

The main object of the increased Army Estimates in 1937-38, approximately £3,183,000, was to protect vital localities against raids. Accordingly the bulk of the money was devoted to (a) continuing the strengthening of the fixed coast defences at the main ports and (b) a further instalment of the anti-aircraft defences of the main ports. At Sydney 9·2-inch and 6-inch armament was soon installed, and anti-aircraft guns and search-lights provided or provided for. The vital industrial centre of Newcastle would be equipped with modern armament, and at Fremantle, Brisbane, Darwin, Melbourne and Hobart similar defences to those at Sydney would be installed.

The permanent forces would be increased by 148 during the year, to provide additional instructional staff for duty with the Militia (including anti-aircraft defence units), personnel for coast defence units and the necessary technical staff for the more complicated modern equipment being installed. The strength of the Militia had been increased from 26,295 to the minimum number of 35,000 considered necessary for training in peace and to provide for expansion in war, and the Government rightly considered that this satisfactory advance was the direct product of improved conditions in the voluntary training system. An increase in the annual grant to rifle clubs was made in the new Estimates.

Thus effect was given to the Government's policy that since sea-power alone could not provide a complete defence against raids, the Army organization should

provide for the defence of vital localities by means of artillery and anti-aircraft artillery defences, by garrisons, and by military forces sufficient to deal with landing parties where such operations were feasible. The Australian Army organization would now provide for a Field Army of seven divisions.

Similarly the 1937-38 Estimates for the Royal Australian Air Force, totalling £2,658,000, were designed to provide more effective defence against sea-borne raids primarily. After suggesting his scheme for the air defence of this Dominion in 1928, Sir John Salmond had expressed the opinion that when this was completed the Australian Air Force "would comprise a balanced composite force, which should by its potential offensive power offer a serious deterrent to invasion." Part I of the Salmond Scheme had been completed by June 1937, and the following new units had been established:

New South Wales—

- A station headquarters.
- An aircraft depot.
- An army co-operation squadron.
- A general reconnaissance squadron.
- Expansion of the fleet co-operation flight into a squadron.

Victoria—

- A station headquarters.
- A fighter bomber squadron.
- A general reconnaissance squadron.
- A recruit and technical training unit.

Western Australia—

- A citizen air force for co-operation with the fixed coast defences.

A large part of the new Air Estimates was earmarked to meet the increased cost of new types of aircraft, with considerably higher performance than those originally provided for under the Three Years' Programme; and it had been found necessary to increase the permanent personnel by 353, making a total strength of 2,472, due to the introduction of the higher performance aircraft, such as Blenheims, that required more extensive maintenance and larger operating crews. "Actually of the £1,257,000 provided this year for new expenditure on the Air Force, £737,000 is for the additional cost of improved types of aircraft and their maintenance and the increased building cost of projects commenced under the Three Years' Programme."¹

The new scheme envisaged the eventual trebling of the Air Force personnel. Five additional bases, three of which should be available before the end of 1938, were planned. A system of regular patrols round the coasts of the Dominion would probably be organized, not only to provide pilots with invaluable experience, but also to assist the work of the Customs Department in such localities as North Queensland, where there had been trouble with foreign fishing-vessels. It was possible that underground hangars and catapult take-off equipment would be provided at Port Darwin; and arrangements would probably be made for periodical interchanges of squadrons between Australia and Singapore, Borneo and New Zealand.

The object of this expansion was to provide an Air Force capable of co-operating in the unified scheme of defence that the Lyons Government had envisaged. The Prime Minister himself said at the time:

¹ Speech on the Defence Estimates, 1937-38, by Sir Archdale Parkhill, *Federal Parliamentary Debates*, September 8, 1937.

"The growing strength of the Air Force is becoming a valuable insurance against invasion, for an invader must be confident of being able, on arrival, to operate air forces adequate to ensure air superiority during the landing and subsequently to protect the expedition and its reinforcements and supplies on arrival at their destination, against action by the air forces of Australia."¹

A seven-fold increase in the vote to civil aviation would provide a valuable adjunct to air defence in the matter of ground facilities, resources of pilots and machines that could be used in an emergency. Altogether the new programme was designed to transform the Royal Australian Air Force into a factor of real importance in the general scheme of Imperial defence, and there was justification for Sir Archdale Parkhill's remark when he came to England for the Coronation that the Force "might quite possibly be able to supplement the defence of Singapore or the East Indies in the event of hostilities breaking out."²

The financial provision for the Munitions Supply Branch on the Estimates was £1,039,000, to be devoted to three lines of expansion. First, existing sources of local production of munitions were to be expanded by the modernization and the extension of factories, laboratories and proof stations. Second, additions were to be made to the gun ammunition factory for production of cartridge cases for anti-aircraft ammunition, to the ordnance factory for the production of a new type of anti-aircraft gun and mountings, and to the machine-gun factory for the production of the Bren gun. Third, orders to an initial value limit of £100,000 were to be

¹ In the Federal House, August 24, 1937.

² *The Morning Post*, April 24, 1937.

placed with local manufacturers for "educational purposes," so that "the potentialities of industry might be accurately gauged."

The modernization of the existing munitions factories (costing £460,000 at first) would, in the words of one observer, make Australia "second only to Britain in the Empire in the possession of facilities for the manufacture of war materials." It is believed that eventually certain of the new factories, such as that devoted to the manufacture of the Bren gun, will become not only the main source of supply to Australia, but also to New Zealand, South Africa and the British forces at Singapore. The "educational orders" to industry would in the first place be for such items as steel shell bodies for the Navy and Army, steel and iron bomb bodies for the Air Force and brass primers for shells for the Army. It is hoped that eventually local industry will play a large part in the supply of munitions, and undoubtedly the orders already placed will increase the prosperity of many areas, foster infant manufacturing industries and promote new employment.

It will be remembered that at the 1937 Imperial Conference Australia received credit for the part she had already played in beginning the local manufacture of munitions, and her example had a great deal to do with the important decision of the Conference that Imperial munitions production should, as far as possible, be decentralized.

Thus the Lyons Government laid its plans—plans, be it noted, that were heartily endorsed by the people of Australia at the subsequent General Elections. This contest was fought primarily on the defence issue. The Labour Party in pre-election propaganda had condemned the Government's proposals and put forward

alternative ones, mainly to the effect that the defence of the country could best be served by abandoning the Navy and creating a monster Air Force. The sentiment behind this surprising suggestion—surprising because Labour elsewhere regarded all air forces with pious horror—was that reliance upon naval defence meant reliance on the Royal Navy, which meant tacit acceptance of the doctrine of Imperialism, whereas self-reliance was the only hope for Australia—or the Trades Hall Australian. Moreover, it was considered that such a policy would find decisive favour with the very large air-minded section of the community. But fortunately the Australian people had more sense. They returned the Lyons Government with a fine majority, and the work of preparing those defences began.

3

But since then the international situation has continued to deteriorate, and on two separate occasions within the space of a year the Australian Government has been forced by events beyond its control to speed-up and enlarge the defence programme outlined above. It was announced on March 24, 1938, that the Government had decided to spend an additional £24,800,000 on defence during the next three years, bringing the total expenditure during that period to approximately £43,000,000.

The Naval Vote would be increased to £7,750,000, and the additional money spent on two modern cruisers of the *Sydney* type, 7,000 tons, with 6-inch guns. One of these would be taken over in September 1938 and the other in July 1939, while the seaplane carrier *Albatross*

would be given to the British Government in part payment. Moreover, two additional sloops would be constructed in Australia for anti-submarine patrol work in the vicinity of harbours and on coastal trade routes. The seagoing personnel would be increased by 1,500 to man the new ships and to provide the trained men required for ships in reserve, and the armed merchant cruisers which would be used in an emergency, bringing the total Navy personnel to nearly 6,000. Reserves of naval stores, ammunition and fuel oil would be increased.

Similarly a total new expenditure for the Army of £5,500,000 would provide for further strengthening of the fixed coast defences and anti-aircraft defences, and for an increase in the personnel of the permanent forces. At least £1,750,000 would be spent on mechanization and provision of the latest anti-tank guns and rifles. An even larger additional sum, namely, £8,800,000, would be spent on the Air Force to bring the first-line strength of aircraft, apart from reserves, from 96 to 198, to establish new stations at Darwin, Brisbane, Canberra and somewhere on the New South Wales coast, and to enable the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation to increase output of Australian-built machines. The publication of a special report on the Air Force by Sir Edward Ellington has subsequently given the Government a useful lead as to possible reforms in the system of training and administration. The enthusiasm of young recruits during recent months has been even more stimulating. In Sydney alone more than one hundred applications a day were recently being received for nine hundred vacant positions as fitters, turners, stewards, cooks, photographers, wireless operators and instrument-makers.

Under the supplementary Estimates the total new expenditure for Government munitions factories and the organization on industry would be £2,800,000. As an adjunct to the Army programme the Government would provide for further extensions to factories, and would raise the output of ammunition and explosives to full capacity. It was announced in August 1938 that the construction by Imperial Chemical Industries of a synthetic ammonia plant near Melbourne at a cost of £500,000 would make Australia independent of nitric acid supplies from overseas in the event of an emergency.

Such an event very nearly occurred in September 1938. It can be revealed that at that critical time the Australian defence machinery was set in motion, and that, indeed, it has not been slowed down since. Immediately afterwards the then Defence Minister (Mr. Thorby) announced that the strength of the Militia force would be raised from 35,000 to 42,000, with the ultimate objective of 50,000, while the permanent force, then 25,000, would also be substantially increased, principally by the addition of more artillery and engineers for coastal defences. Good progress was being made with the local manufacture of anti-aircraft guns, which were now being regularly delivered.

But Australians are realists, so forthright that they cannot be satisfied with half-measures when they are convinced of the necessity of action; and at the end of 1938 the Commonwealth Cabinet decided to accelerate the rearmament drive still further. A newly appointed Minister for Defence (Lieut.-Colonel Street), announced in the House at the beginning of December that a heavy increase in expenditure on the Three Years' Programme

had been authorized, bringing the total amount to £63,000,000, as follows:

	£	Increase £
Navy	20,548,000	4,615,000
Army	79,700,000	8,092,000
Air Force	16,444,000	3,932,000
Munitions	4,855,000	1,798,000

Features of the new programme were to be the construction of two *Tribal* class destroyers at Cockatoo Dockyard, and of twelve high-speed motor torpedo boats. A British Admiralty surveyor was invited to advise on the feasibility of a site for a battleship dock at Sydney costing £3,000,000 but it was unlikely that a capital ship would be purchased now, in view of an "assurance given by Britain that an adequate fleet will be stationed at Singapore."¹

Under the new orders the strength of the Militia was to be raised to 70,000, exactly double the existing strength, and it was decided to create a reserve of 50,000 trained men, so that Australia would be able to call on 120,000 men in the event of an emergency. By the end of February 1939 the Militia strength under this new scheme already stood at 63,383, and for months now recruits have been pouring in at Sydney alone at the rate of one hundred a day. Later the excellent scheme of Lieut.-General E. K. Squires to establish a permanent mobile army of 10,000 men was adopted by the Government; and the latest news is that the Australian military forces are to adopt the British "Command" system of organization instead of the present system of State district bases. Then arrange-

¹ The *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, December 7, 1938.

ments were made for Major-General J. D. Lavarack, Chief of the Australian General Staff, and Major-General R. M. Downs, Director-General of the Army Medical Services, to study in England the latest developments of army organization, equipment and training.

Similarly, Air Vice-Marshal R. Williams, Chief of Staff of the Royal Australian Air Force, was sent to England for two years' experience with the R.A.F.; and it was announced recently that the programme for expanding the Air Force was well ahead of schedule. First-line strength, about 132 machines in February 1939, is to be increased to 212, and 900 men annually are to be added to the personnel during the next three years. Before long local industry will be able to supply all the two-seater, single-engined machines required.¹ No difficulty is expected in local production of all machine guns required during the next three years.

Indeed, very rapid strides have been made in the Australian production of munitions. Government factories for the manufacture of naval cordite and cartridge cases have been completed; mobile anti-aircraft guns are in full production; and the facilities for the manufacture of gun ammunition have been so extended that orders are already being taken to supply other Dominions. As a defence measure, moreover, serious attention has been given to the necessity of accumulating in Australia large stores of petrol and other liquid fuel. An expert committee recently reported to the Government that to lay down a year's supply would entail an outlay of between £5,000,000 and £10,000,000 dead capital. But the major oil companies, who normally maintain six months' supply in

¹ This matter is discussed at length in Chapter 14.

Australia, have decided co-operatively to increase this amount to avoid a large and unproductive outlay by the Government.

In March the Australian Prime Minister completed the picture by announcing, first, that Australia, in co-operation with Britain, was to start an aeroplane construction programme which would cost several million pounds, and, second, that the Cabinet had decided to introduce a *compulsory* national register of Australia's man power.

An interesting feature of this register scheme is its provision for women. There are to be councils in each State for the registration of women in classes, according to age and qualifications. The services that women will be called upon to undertake will include the provision of supplies for combatants, organization of hostels, rest homes, reading-rooms and coffee stalls, entertainment, car driving, air raid precautions, censorship and interpreters' work.

Finally, the plans of the Defence Department for the protection of Papua have been announced. Fixed coastal artillery, an air squadron and naval boom defences are to be provided at Port Moresby, and a garrison will be established.

All this constitutes a vast plan for a young country, larger than Europe with a total population considerably less than that of London, but it is also a magnificent contribution to Imperial security, whose value cannot be assessed in terms of men, money and guns alone. Let me, for the sake of clarity, recapitulate the main heads of that contribution.

Australia now has a Navy of five modern cruisers, five destroyers and two building, four sloops, three local seaward defence vessels, twelve high-speed motor tor-

pedo boats, and an expanding personnel (at the time of writing) of about six thousand men.

Australia's coastal defences are stronger than ever before in her history, and have behind them a strong permanent force and a territorial army nearly as strong as that of England only a few years ago. The first-line strength of the Air Force will soon be 212 machines, with a personnel of over three thousand. Munitions and general supplies may soon be produced exclusively by self-contained Australian industries, whose surplus products may be usefully available to other parts of the Empire.

So Australia has made prodigious efforts to prepare her defences in time. During the Great War the Mother Country had remarkable support from this Dominion. I think that my survey shows that in any future conflict the striking power of Australia would be immeasurably more effective than it was even in 1914-18.

4

Before concluding this important chapter, however, I am going to give a brief description of a remarkable system, the compulsory national service of Australia that lasted from 1909 to 1929. Complete details of this will be found in an Appendix to the book, but I feel that a general survey should be given in this place.

It was like this. In the uneasy decade before the Great War Australia became acutely conscious of her vulnerability. She suddenly feared invasion then just as many English people are apprehensive of air attack now. But not having the population to supply a strong standing

army or territorial army, she had to resort to compulsory military training for all young men.

Even the Labour opinion of those days was solidly in favour of a modified measure of conscription, urgent in the knowledge that good working conditions and high wages would not survive a defeat in war followed by a successful invasion. After much public discussion, in which the constituencies by large majorities supported the principle of universal naval and military training, a law was passed by a *Liberal-Labour Government* in 1909, and compulsion established.

Under this every lad from 12 to 14 had to undergo physical training in the schools; from 15 to 18 he had to receive 16 days' annual preliminary military training in the Senior Cadets; and from 18 to 25 to serve a minimum of 16 days, including an eight days' camp, in the naval or military forces, whichever was chosen by the recruit.

Lord Kitchener was invited by the Commonwealth Government to report on the scheme, which with some modifications he approved, and assured the Australian people that as it yearly developed with the natural increase of the population, the Government proposals would safely meet the necessities and dangers with which Australia was likely to be faced. The difficulties attendant upon the institution of the new system—absolutely novel to a British community—were enormous; but I have the testimony of one of the organizers that these were surmounted with "remarkably little friction, whilst with the exception of a few isolated instances, the people and the trainees entered into the work with surprising unanimity."

This authority continues that there were a few protests from parents who objected to compulsion, by

others whose "consciences were so tender that they preferred others to make public sacrifices on their behalf," and on the part of some of the lads who resented the unaccustomed discipline and loss of previously enjoyed leisure and amusement. In some few cases parents were fined, and in other cases lads had to face civil courts for neglect of military duty.

Remembering, however, that "Australian youth had always been imbued with the feeling of social equality, and that respect for superiors had never been a particularly prominent national trait, the response to the national law was remarkably hearty and sympathetic. Perhaps the prevailing democratic spirit was actually one of the main causes of this, for "*to rule is to serve.*"

There was also a certain amount of objection at first among extreme labour movements, but the great mass of the workers heartily supported the defence legislation. A vigorous minority among the mining population of Broken Hill (a hotbed of extremists then and now) tried to get the miners' sons to offer a passive resistance to the national scheme, but upon a ballot by the Miners' Association, its members gave a large majority in favour of retaining the Act.

After the scheme had been in operation for eighteen months, one area officer, in charge of a shipping district, was asked to give a progress report. This remarkable testimony is worth quoting—and reading:

"I was told when I took over this area I was up against a hard task and that it would break me," he wrote. "For my first three months I thought it might, but now I am glad to say I have broken it, and without one appeal to the civil court. As you know, the cadets here are the sons of wharf labourers, stevedores, sailors, fishermen and factory hands, and at first most of them regarded me as an enemy—they

were a most unruly, untamed lot. Now they all regard any insubordination as an attack on the company, and are really a very willing lot. I disregarded the regulations a bit last year, bought a football, and used to give them twenty minutes' football sandwiched between two hours of drill, and even now do so occasionally; but was surprised the other day during some scouting training to hear some say they would rather go on than kick a football. Their military work is encouraging the man in them. Drill appeals to their grown-up instincts, and football is a thing for 'kids.'

"The Mayor and several of the parsons have told me the training is doing an immense amount of good in the town; more courtesy in the streets, less horse-play and better manners; while from the way a lad carries himself one can easily pick out the trainees in a crowd."

The system of compulsory military training gave Australia what the early champions of national defence had demanded, a framework into which the fighting material of the nation could be filled when the emergency arose. Four years later that emergency did arise, and the splendid showing of the Anzacs on Gallipoli, and in France and the Near East, was the direct result of that wise preparation. Whereas Englishmen had to spend weary months in training camps, learning desperately to be soldiers before it was too late, the young Australians *were* soldiers.

The pity was that when the Anzacs returned from the war they believed that there was no need for them to be soldiers any longer. The forces of international disruption had been finally vanquished, they felt, and large-scale warfare as an implement of national policy had been discredited at last. In any case, Australia was no longer in danger of invasion, and compulsory military service was therefore considered unnecessary.

So the system was drastically reduced in scope—the

period of training in the Senior Cadets and the Citizen Forces was halved exactly—and when Australia was hit by the financial blizzard of 1929, compulsory national training was completely suspended in the desperate effort necessary to save this Dominion from complete bankruptcy.

Curiously enough the job was done by another Labour Government, the first since 1914, but there is no doubt at all that the principal motive was financial expediency. Even in 1929 Australia was still fairly confident that a repetition of 1914 was quite unthinkable. The compulsory training system was merely suspended during a period of acute financial crisis—bear in mind that it was always an expensive system for a young country—and the Defence Act itself was allowed to remain on the Statute Book, so that at any time the system could be restored.

In order to make this point perfectly clear it may be as well to quote two Australian writers with marked Left tendencies. Professor W. K. Hancock has stated in his book *Australia*:

“In 1929 another Labour Government suspended the system of compulsory military training. Underlying the elections of 1929 were the economic crisis and a shrinkage of about 10 per cent in the national income.

“Labour had in effect promised that this shrinkage would not adversely affect the ordinary man's standard of living or chance of obtaining employment. The first problem which the new Government had to face was the problem of finance. Its first action was to economize at the expense of the Defence Department. In 1927–28 the Australians had spend on defence (exclusive of naval construction and other items paid for out of loan) 17s. 4d. per head of population. There was a chance to save money.”

Another Left Wing author, an opponent of conscriptive training in any form, wrote in 1935: "The most impelling reason for the suspension of compulsion in Australia was financial stringency."

And it is interesting to note that in March 1939 the Labour Premier of Tasmania (Mr. A. G. Ogilvie) stated publicly that his Government believed in compulsory military and physical training, and in the mobilization of wealth and industry.

But I must conclude this lengthy chapter on a still more striking note. In a broadcast at Melbourne on February 6, 1939, B. A. Barnett, the Australian wicket-keeper, gave the following reason why he had just joined the Militia: "It would be a tragedy if anything happened to prevent Test matches being played. Therefore we must see that Australia is a force with which other Powers must reckon seriously before tackling."

That can be taken, with a pinch of the salt that is sense of humour, as a reasonable interpretation of the Australian spirit.

The Arming of South Africa

I

After the Great War, during which Germany had been successfully driven from the African continent, the Union of South Africa concluded an agreement with Great Britain to ensure that the Royal Navy would continue to protect her protracted coastline. This pact, signed by General Smuts and Mr. Winston Churchill in 1922, specifically recognized Simonstown Harbour as a British naval base; and undoubtedly Britain stood to gain as much from the arrangement as South Africa. But the agreement did seem, at that time, to cover this Dominion very effectively against the risks of war. Now that Germany had been removed from South-West Africa, Tanganyika, Togoland and the Cameroons, there was nothing to fear from the land, while the Royal Navy would guard the Union against attack from the sea. South Africa had good reason to consider herself fortunately placed.

This happy state of affairs endured for several years; and doubtless there were many people, both in South Africa and Great Britain, who believed that it would endure indefinitely. Experience never teaches a certain type of person that every situation, however admirably balanced, contains within itself the seed of its own decay, and that national policies must be constantly revised if they are not to be overtaken. Thus South Africa discovered two years ago that unforeseen events

had altered her situation completely. The Italian conquest of Abyssinia and consequent militarization of that country and neighbouring Libya, particularly the policy of raising black levies from these territories, had reverberated through the continent like the beat of a war-drum.

Meanwhile, the speeding-up of air communications between the Union and Europe had nullified much of that old advantage of isolation; and Germany's campaign to recover her former colonies had made it necessary once again to consider those territories as potential theatres of conflict. At the same time great prosperity in the Union as the result of demand for gold had made South Africans acutely conscious of their vulnerable good fortune in a hungry world; while statements about Great Britain's naval weakness and the growing naval strength of potential enemies turned anxious minds to sombre contemplation of a 4,000-mile coastline. Then it was realized suddenly that because of the confidence bred by the 1918 victory and the 1922 Naval Agreement, South Africa had allowed her indigenous defence forces to become reduced to a moribund condition. Even the extreme Nationalists, who held that the Imperial connection was a simple device to serve the ends of Great Britain exclusively, were moved to a curious excitement by this uncomfortable thought; and the stage was set at last for Mr. Pirow.

The Union should be grateful for that remarkable coincidence of man and hour. It was necessary that South Africa should rearm, and she had the money (within limits) to rearm, but, without the guidance of a Defence Minister of Mr. Pirow's dynamic personality and methodical character, it is unlikely that she would have been able to rearm intelligently and

in time. Once given the necessary mandate and promise of money, this outstanding figure among statesmen of the Dominions in recent years turned impatiently to his task and produced a plan for the defence of South Africa that, while by no means the most expensive or ambitious, stands head and shoulders above the plans of the other Dominions for sheer efficiency and technical conception. This was laid before the South African House of Assembly on September 7, 1938.

2

The distinguishing feature of the plan is its close connection with South Africa's strategic desiderata. Mr. Pirow observed that the man-power resources of his country were dangerously limited as compared with those of other second-class Powers. And he realized that since South Africa's prosperity in recent years had not entirely banished the spectre of want from among her people, there would consequently be definite limits to expenditure on rearmament, so that a large measure of voluntary service would be necessary.

Then Mr. Pirow considered the facts that on the one hand South Africa's geographical position was such that the Union forces would not be required to make their maximum effort until some six months after the outbreak of hostilities; while on the other hand the Union would most certainly be called upon to fight a mobile war, and would scarcely be liable to gas or bomb attacks on towns. To quote Mr. Pirow's actual words when he was presenting those memorable Defence Estimates, the Union approached her defence problem from "premises as different from those overseas as the

German East African campaign was from warfare in Flanders."¹

The considered view of the General Staff was that South Africa, under present world conditions, would hardly be liable to attack from the sea, otherwise than by way of an isolated raid, but there was "more than a possibility that we shall, within our generation, be called upon to defend ourselves against an enemy on or beyond our northern borders, that is to say, in bush country."² And again: "We shall have to meet an enemy either in the bush on or beyond our northern boundary, or along our coastline when he attempts a landing in force or attacks our ports."³ But coastal defence alone would require a land army, numbering, with reserves, not less than one-third of the total forces, besides a number of fortified harbours, and such an army would have to be more liberally equipped with medium and heavy artillery and armoured vehicles than forces for bush frontier work.

On the basis of these postulates, Mr. Pirow introduced the Three Years' Defence Plan, to cost approximately £6,000,000 over that period, £5,000,000 of which would be spent on additional arms, equipment and defence works, and £1,000,000 on coastal defences. To meet the cost £1,000,000 would be provided in the 1938-39 estimates, £2,000,000 in the 1939-40 estimates and £3,000,000 in the following year.

Perhaps the outstanding preliminary feature of the Plan as enunciated by Mr. Pirow in that ominous September of 1938 was the proposal to go beyond the recommendations of the 1928 Report of the Committee of Imperial Defence, and make Cape Town proof

¹ *Union of South Africa, House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 32, 1938.

² *Op. cit.*

³ *Op. cit.*

against attack by battleships. In 1928 the Committee had been faced by a very different world situation, and had suggested that it would be sufficient to protect the harbour against cruisers. Accordingly Robben Island, seven miles off Cape Town in Table Bay, is at present being equipped with batteries of 15-inch guns, and may soon be regarded, in the arresting phrase of a journalist commentator, as a "Heligoland of the South." According to this writer, the island was used at one time as a prison and later as a leper asylum. The leper colony was removed to Pretoria eight years ago, and for the past three years, since it was reserved for military use, Robben Island has been closed to the public. The batteries, with their range of about 35 miles, will protect the entrance to Table Bay, while similar guns will be mounted on the shore, overlooking the Bay.¹ Similarly Durban, the vital terminus of the Empire flying-boat service, will be made cruiser-proof, and East London and Port Elizabeth will be provided with strong coastal defences.

It may be noted that the Dominions Secretary was asked towards the end of last year by Sir Charles Cayzer, Conservative Member for Chester, whether, on the occasion of Mr. Pirow's visit to Great Britain, the "opportunity was taken of considering the adequacy of the arrangements for insuring the naval defence of South Africa in time of war," and whether "any consideration was given to the desirability of the Union Government's undertaking a larger share in the joint naval defence of Union territory in the future."

Mr. Malcolm MacDonald replied that the object of Mr. Pirow's visit had been to discuss certain technical aspects of the defence programme of South Africa,

¹ *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, September 1938.

including questions of naval defence, and the questions involved were settled as a result of discussions with him. He could not anticipate any statement which Mr. Pirow might make after his return to South Africa. The Minister of Defence in the Union had recently announced the expenditure of very considerable sums on the defence of the Union, and a good deal of that was involved in naval defence.¹

As regards military forces, the new Defence Plan aims to place in the field and maintain the following:

(1) Three Active Citizen Force Divisions numbering approximately 67,000 men; (2) three special Defence Rifle Association Brigades (Commandos) numbering approximately 10,000 men; and (3) three field forces of Defence Rifle Association riflemen, numbering approximately 60,000 men. According to Mr. Pirow, this total of approximately 137,000 troops represents the maximum available for normal defence, although conscription of every male between the ages of seventeen and sixty might produce another 150,000 citizens capable of carrying a rifle.

Thus in event of war the Union would possess a striking force of over a quarter of a million men, or more than 12 per cent of the population, which probably represents, in the view of one authority, "the limit of its available military strength."² Although this may appear small, the writer continues, "it would be equivalent to an army of well over five million men on the basis of Great Britain's population." It should be added that training in bush warfare is being made a special feature of the Plan, since the strategy on which the Plan is based contemplates, as already envisaged, the

¹ *The Times*, December 21, 1938.

² *South Africa*, September 10, 1938.

possibility of a land attack, perhaps by way of Portuguese territory. And this despite the widely held South African view that such an attack is unlikely. "Most people would probably consider that in the circumstances in which the Union is placed, the danger of an attack across the land frontier is rather more remote than the possibility of sporadic attack from the air and sea."¹

According to the Three Years' Plan most of the necessary arms and equipment is being bought through the British War Office, but a certain proportion is being manufactured in South Africa. Within two months of the establishment of an ammunition factory at Pretoria in September 1938, approximately two million cartridges had been manufactured, while the factory had only worked eight-hour day shifts. It may be noted that the raw materials for this industry are all obtained from local sources, with the exception of aluminium, which is imported. In fact, South Africa's only deficiencies consist of certain metals such as aluminium, with the addition of rubber and oil. An output of twelve million cartridges a year represents the peace-time requirements of the Union's defence forces.

Modern equipment is certainly South Africa's greatest military need at the present time, and the aim of the Defence Department is to compensate for the shortage of man-power by the greatest possible supply of automatic weapons. In addition to small-arms ammunition the following items of ammunition are now being manufactured in South Africa, in great part as a result of co-operation between the Defence Department and the Government Railway Workshops. Cordite, infantry mortars, steel helmets, metal components for aircraft

¹ Op. cit.

and other bombs, T.N.T., armour plate, filling plant for bombs, shells and fuses, 3·7-inch howitzer equipments, shells for field guns, 3·7-inch, 3·45-inch, and 18-pounder armoured cars, gas masks, 3·45-inch gun, howitzer equipment and 2-pounder anti-tank guns.

Moreover, the Union's Air Force under Mr. Pirow's Plan is becoming every day a more efficient instrument, and the force of one thousand pilots that is being built up should prove ample for the Union's immediate needs. In due course South Africa will have an air fleet of some five hundred to six hundred interceptor fighters and bombing-planes. This year, for instance, Durban is forming a special air squadron with thirty-eight fighting aircraft, and a second squadron will be formed next year. At present the Government's policy is to buy at a nominal price so-called obsolescent warplanes from Great Britain on the understanding that in event of war the necessary first-line machines would be supplied from accumulated reserves.

It is interesting to note that the price of the up-to-date aircraft is more than forty times that of the obsolescent machines, and reassuring to reflect that aeroplanes of ancient vintage have proved very useful weapons in Spain and China. Mr. Pirow has definitely stated that his Government has no intention for the present of building aircraft in South Africa; and during his recent visit to London the Defence Minister paid a graceful tribute to Great Britain's aeroplane manufacturers. "I acknowledge the superiority of British military aeroplanes, which are the best in the world," he said, "and I am here now to buy as many British planes as the Government can let us have."

It should not be forgotten that South Africa possesses an immense reserve of man-power in the form of its

native population. "While I feel certain that our people would never sanction the training of non-Europeans in the use of arms, they can be of very great assistance in other ways," stated Mr. Pirow when announcing his Plan. Such ways included labour service to relieve the European troops of all but their military duties, particularly as ammunition carriers right up to the front lines. "Selected labour battalions from the Rand mines, operating under skilled miners with unlimited quantities of dynamite could, if occasion demanded it, literally move mountains," Mr. Pirow concluded.

Recently the South African Government, moved as other Governments throughout the Empire have been moved by the enhanced tempo of Nazi aggression in Europe, has been considering whether it should not increase its expenditure on rearmament still further. Mr. Pirow stated in March that, thanks to the generosity of the British Government, South Africa had acquired sufficient military equipment for "a fair degree of safety." But there would be "a shortage until Britain had satisfied her own requirements." Referring to defence expansion generally and Air Force expansion in particular, Mr. Pirow said South Africa had undertaken to become the strongest country in the world of its size.

Other late news is that the British Government has decided to lend the monitor *Erebus*, 7,200 tons, to the South African Government for permanent station off Robben Island until the fortifications are completed. She will then go to Durban until the coastal defences there are ready. The South African Government has agreed to pay the cost of refitting the *Erebus*, about £600,000, and the ship's two 15-inch guns will subsequently have a range of more than 25 miles.

A conference of commandants and honorary colonels of South Africa's burgher commandos, held at Cape Town in March, unanimously decided in favour of modernization of the commando forces. The proposal that machine guns should be issued to each commando and that fifty picked young men in each should be given a thorough military training, was received with remarkable enthusiasm. The result will undoubtedly be a further strengthening of the Union's defence forces. And it is understood that the Government is now considering the institution of a national register, with the establishment of several new special units.

One of these will be formed soon as a result of a Bill to be introduced in the Union Parliament authorizing the amalgamation of the South-West African police force with that of the Union. The South African police has a number of machine gunners in its ranks, who will accompany a special battalion of picked men with military training to strengthen the weaker South-West African force.

The change in the attitude of South Africa towards the possibility of war is plainly revealed by the foregoing account of recent preparations. Until the last few years this Dominion, while ready to co-operate with Great Britain in the maintenance of a naval base at Simonstown and a naval squadron in local waters, was anxious to preserve in Imperial affairs what may best be described as an attitude of benevolent neutrality.

Lip-service to such an attitude is still maintained by the Union Government. Introducing the Defence Plan outlined above, Mr. Pirow stated: "We are not bound directly or indirectly to take part in any war in Africa or elsewhere. We shall not take part in a war except

when the true interests of South Africa make such a participation inevitable. We as a Government will not even take part in an apparently inevitable war except after the people of this country through their representatives in Parliament have with the greatest measure of unanimity given us an unambiguous mandate to that effect."¹

The Defence Minister said that it was not difficult to conceive of circumstances where it would be suicidal not to side with Britain, but it was equally easy to imagine Britain in a quarrel in which nine-tenths of the South African people would refuse to participate. Moreover, it was possible to imagine trouble in which Britain was not interested, but which was a matter of paramount importance to South Africa, for example, where the integrity of Portuguese East Africa was threatened. "In other words, the test as to whether Britain is involved in a war is not by itself of value in connection with South Africa's participation in such a war."

But declarations of such a nature may sometimes admit of ambiguous interpretation—every Government of the British Empire might logically say as much, including the Government of the United Kingdom, which would certainly hesitate to declare war without a mandate from the people—and time can only be wasted in analysing their doubtful implications. The fact does remain that South Africa has become aware of her extreme vulnerability, brought about by changing world conditions, and is taking active steps to remedy the position. Whether these steps may imply increased co-operation with other members of the British Commonwealth of Nations is a question that

¹ *Union of South Africa, House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 32, 1938.

politicians may justifiably hesitate to answer. But it cannot be denied that recent events have made such co-operation inevitable, and this is tacitly recognized by the Union Government.

A speech was made recently by Mr. Louw, a Nationalist Member of Parliament, in which he indignantly declared that General Hertzog, the Prime Minister, was "now associated with Imperialists like Sir Abe Bailey." Replying to this accusation, the indomitable Sir Abe issued a bold statement advising "the people of South Africa, Dutch and English, to remain under the protection of the British Navy";¹ and the following day no less a person than General Smuts, himself a member of General Hertzog's Government, made a remarkable speech in direct accord with Sir Abe's statement.

After referring to the "dangerous" international situation, and the widening gap between the ideologies of Fascism and the democracies, General Smuts said that South Africa could not expect to live in "a fool's paradise of neutrality" which would afford her no protection whatsoever. She could not expect to be unaffected by what was going on. South Africa was a veritable treasure chest of gold, diamonds and coal. Yet her small population of 2,000,000, compared with the 70,000,000 of Germany and Japan, could not decide whether to stand together or to take separate roads. "People were saying that under the circumstances South Africa should cut adrift from her friends, and not avail herself of the protection of the British Navy, but neutrality would be no protection."²

Mr. Pirow himself stated during his visit to England

¹ *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, January 12, 1939.

² *The Cape Times*, January 13, 1939.

that the Union Government held the view that the Munich talks should be followed up to find a permanent basis for world peace, "but it did not favour peace at any price"; and from other statements of members of the present administration it might almost appear that, apart from looking after herself, South Africa is prepared to institute and maintain the equivalent of a Monroe Doctrine for the southern half of the African continent. Not only has the Union made it clear that the mandate over South-West Africa could never be renounced, but she has stated that invasion of say, Angola or Mozambique by a hostile power could not be tolerated. On the basis of this bold policy the Union has initiated the Defence Plan described above, but it is obvious that the Defence Minister and his colleagues realize that their utmost efforts would be useless without the support of the Imperial connection.

In conclusion it may be remarked that when Mr. Pirow introduced his Plan he was asked by a Member of the South African Assembly whether it was part of "a scheme for co-operation with the Empire and that as a measure of co-operation it would be linked to the scheme which the Imperial Defence Committee of Great Britain has in view."

And it must be recorded sadly that Mr. Pirow could only answer: "What scheme is that? I don't know of such a scheme."

Chapter 7

Wings For New Zealand

I

A few years ago New Zealand was the most defenceless country of its size and importance in the world. This Dominion had never maintained large forces, but the economic depression of 1930-34 reduced them to extremely inadequate proportions. The strength of the permanent military forces stood at only 92 officers, 11 staff cadets and 421 other ranks on May 30, 1935. The Territorial Force, carrying out each year only thirty-six hours' training drills and parades and six day's continuous training in camps, comprised 779 officers and 11,512 other ranks. The net expenditure on military defence during 1935-36 was £378,179, compared with £453,580 in 1927-28.

The New Zealand Air Force consisted on May 30, 1936, of only 28 service aircraft, half of which were obsolete, and a personnel of 20 officers and 106 other ranks. The Territorial Air Force, using the same machines, comprising approximately 73 officers. The New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy consisted of two light cruisers, two sloops and one minesweeper, mostly obsolete, with a small personnel of officers and only 555 ratings. There was a Naval Reserve Force of 79 officers and 665 ratings. Naval expenditure during the year 1935-36 was only £592,859, including £100,000 as the last of ten contributions towards the cost of the Singapore Base.

New Zealand is larger than the United Kingdom, contains considerable mineral wealth, and boasts remarkable fertility, great natural beauty and an equable climate.

But fortunately the Italo-Abyssinian War had a salutary effect on New Zealand public opinion, and the worsening of the world situation that attended the development of the Spanish Civil War, together with the announcement of the British rearmament plan, convinced the new Labour Government of this Dominion that some measure of national defence reform was urgently necessary. "We hate all this war propaganda, but if an attack is made on Britain, then we will assist her to the fullest possible extent," stated a member of the Government; and it was this sentiment that eventually inspired the administration to announce a comprehensive land defence policy.

The Territorial Force was reorganized. Many low-strength units were amalgamated; drill-shed training was abolished in favour of field work; it was decided to grant pay for attendances at courses of instruction; and smart blue uniforms were provided for ceremonial occasions and walking out. "New Zealand intends to put her defences on a sound footing and provide proper allowances for trainees," said the Prime Minister, Mr. M. J. Savage. A scheme whereby young men might enrol for three months' training in the principles of coast defence was launched; and it was planned to motorize all Territorial units with the exception of a few mounted rifle regiments.

This new establishment, said the Minister of Defence at the time, would be eight thousand officers and men, "a figure below the present nominal establishment, but equal to present effective strength."¹ The new force

¹ *The British Australian and New Zealander*, September 2, 1937.

would comprise four mounted rifle regiments, one mechanized and one horse; three infantry battalions; ten field, four medium and two light batteries; three field companies of engineers; three signal depots; three army service corps depots; and three field ambulance units. For coastal defence there would be three infantry battalions, two coastal batteries and two anti-aircraft groups.

Perhaps the outstanding reform introduced at that time was the unification of defence control. The Cabinet itself was now to be "entirely responsible for the policy and for the provision and control of the funds to carry out its policy." A Council of Defence, consisting of the Prime Minister as Chairman, the Minister of Defence, such other members as might be appointed by the Prime Minister, the Chief of the Naval Staff, the Chief of the General Staff and the Chief of the Air Staff, would be responsible for advising the Government on broad matters of policy and for co-ordinating the work of the three Services. But it must be noted that this new arrangement, while welcomed in some places on the grounds that it would increase efficiency, was adversely criticized by many military people in the Dominion and a large section of the informed Press. One newspaper summed up the general complaint when it stated that there was always the possibility that the new arrangements would "encourage and enable Ministers to interfere in administrative details instead of confining themselves to broad policy issues."¹

After recommendations by Wing-Commander R. Cochrane, the Government established an Air Board to control the Royal New Zealand Air Force, that was separated from the Defence Department. An Air Force

¹ *The Christchurch Press*, August 23, 1937.

Development Programme was devised with plans for two new operational squadrons equipped with the latest type of aircraft, and new aerodromes for them. A flying school would be established, and, apart from the permanent and Territorial units of the Air Force, it was proposed to build a reserve of trained pilots who could take their place in the Air Force units in the event of attack and provide a source of recruitment for the growing needs of civil aviation. Three full years would be required for the completion of this programme, and in that time some seventy additional pilots would be needed. Certainly a fine proof of the air-mindedness of young New Zealanders was given in the April of that year (1937), when applications were invited for twelve only short-service commissions in the Royal Air Force. Within a fortnight over two thousand applications were received. The Public Works Minister, Mr. R. Semple, stated that New Zealand was verging on "developments in military and civil aviation far beyond anything yet experienced."

The Naval Estimates in 1937 amounted to £760,000, and the principal naval objective was finally laid down as "the establishment of a sea-going squadron as a mobile effective unit based on Auckland." After replacements the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy could now boast two modern cruisers of 7,000 tons each, mounting eight 6-inch guns.

2

But the international situation continued to deteriorate, and during 1938 the New Zealand Government accelerated rearmament. There are grounds for believing

now that the naval defences of this Dominion are likely to be strengthened in the near future by the addition of one more modern cruiser to the squadron. No official pronouncement can be obtained on this point, and it is impossible to state when the third cruiser is likely to arrive on the station, but there are definite indications that some such vessel as H.M.S. *Birmingham* may visit the Dominion during 1939. It might then be added to the permanent strength of the squadron, allowing for a force of three modern cruisers in normal times and two when one of the ships is undergoing refit. The ships of the class mentioned (*Leander*) all have a wide cruising range and powerful armament, and as such are regarded as ideal for the protection of trade routes.¹

Good progress has been made in the reorganization of the existing naval force. The storage and repair services at Devonport, Auckland, have been reconstructed, while administration has been overhauled, and, in the words of the Minister of Finance, Mr. W. Nash, "steps have been taken to give effect to the policy of maintaining an efficient unit consisting of two modern cruisers and ancillary services, self-supporting as far as possible, and working in close co-operation with Royal Navy and Royal Australian Navy units in these and neighbouring waters."² Details of the steps actually taken were reflected in the naval service estimates, Mr. Nash continued. The more important items included provision for completing the reconstruction works at the naval base and Kauri Point armament depot; for the entry of seamen under a short-service scheme of six years' active service followed by six years on the reserve; purchase of land for a naval barracks

¹ *The Christchurch Press*, September 13, 1938.

² *The Dominion*, July 21, 1938.

to replace Philomel; increase of oil fuel, ammunition and stores reserves; and certain miscellaneous works involving a total of approximately £192,000 expenditure on reconstruction and development works and services.

It should be noted, however, that considerable dissatisfaction has been expressed in the Dominion with the progress of naval rearmament, and many people would like to see a naval auxiliary force organized at once. This is an excellent suggestion. New Zealand could also do with some submarines, and it might pay her to contribute to the cost of one or two capital ships. Moreover, the Devonport (N.Z.) Naval Base is now suitable for refits which are at present carried out in England with a great waste of time.

To stimulate recruiting for the Territorial land and air forces an all-round increase of pay at 3s. a day has been made during the last year, so that New Zealand privates and aircraftsmen now receive about 12s. a day and their keep while on service. On the military side particular attention has been paid to strengthening the coastal defences, while additional Territorial artillery units have been established. Various new weapons, mechanized vehicles and other military equipment to enable the most modern methods of training to be adopted by the forces have, after considerable delay, arrived from England. Work has been done at the permanent camps of Narrow Neck, Ngaruawahia, Trentham and Burnham to provide better facilities for territorial training and to fit these centres to carry out efficiently their functions as ordnance stores.

Then the Government recently announced its intention of establishing a voluntary defence force for the protection of the mandated territory of Western Samoa,

which it says is strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Mandate. Membership of the force, at first, will be restricted to Europeans.

The system under which single men are enabled to receive from three to six months' continuous military training has been continued and expanded. Such trainees benefit both mentally and physically, and they will give added strength to the Territorial Force. Similarly the introduction of motorized transport and mechanized artillery equipment has made methods of Territorial training more interesting for all concerned.¹ A New Zealand Scottish Regiment has been sensibly formed. In the course of his annual report on the forces, tabled in the House of Representatives in July last year, the Chief of the General Staff, Major-General J. E. Duigan, stated that a vigorous publicity campaign had assisted recruiting and stimulated public interest. The recruits now coming forward were of good type and physique. Moreover, units constituting a mounted brigade and an infantry division had been provided for in the organization, and could be expanded to their war establishment should a national emergency necessitate this action. "The staff has been concentrating on the training of leaders to allow this expansion to take place, and satisfactory progress has been made."²

Similarly, when he spoke on the defence of New Zealand in event of hostilities last October, the Minister of Defence, Mr. F. Jones, made the point that the aim of his system was essentially to "train leaders." In the last few years three thousand five hundred men had been posted to the reserve list; but their services would be of great value if the need for them should arise. Mr. Jones also referred to coastal defence measures and

¹ Op. cit.

² *The New Zealand Herald*, July 28, 1938.

to rifle clubs. He said it would be possible to expand the land forces quickly and easily. Some degree of mechanization had been accomplished, and it was desired to do more in this direction, but Britain's needs came first, and New Zealand must await the fulfilment of its orders. At present there were orders totalling about £250,000 placed in Britain. "Without going into details I think I have said enough to show that New Zealand is making adequate preparations for defence in the event of hostilities," Mr. Jones concluded. "I have been very pleased with the measure of co-operation given by officers and staffs of the various services, and I think the men in the services are satisfied with the progress that has been made in the last three years."¹

It should be added that the strength of the Regular Forces at May 31, 1938, was 95 officers, 20 officer cadets and 395 other ranks, a total of 510, while the strength of the Territorial Forces was 745 officers and 6,367 other ranks, a total of 7,112, considerably less than the strength at May 30, 1935. Doubtless a too anxious realization of the significance of these figures was responsible for the public protest made by four Territorial colonels during last year, and their subsequent enforced resignation from the service.

Including £750,000 allotted to the purchase of thirty Vickers Wellington bombers to be flown from England to the Dominion during 1939, provision was made in the 1938 estimates for an expenditure of £1,573,900 on aviation. Now the Air Department is organizing a large-scale expansion of the Air Force to coincide with the delivery of the 30 long-range bombers, which will be flown by men specially trained in England for the purpose. An additional 200 men have been enrolled

¹ *The Dunedin Evening Star*, October 5, 1938.

to staff the four main air bases, while reserves of personnel have also been strengthened.

It has been planned for the permanent personnel, only 130 in 1935, to be raised to nearly 1,000 by 1940, and seven Territorial air squadrons have already been established, while the Metropolitan squadrons are to be strengthened. Five Airspeed Oxford machines for training and 29 Buffin aircraft have been purchased from British Air Ministry reserves. The Air Ministry has promised 109 further reserve machines for training, and adequate supplies of ammunition for aerial defence. Several new aerodromes have been constructed and at least 50 more are planned. In the event of hostilities, it has been estimated by the Minister of Defence himself, New Zealand could train at least 1,000 pilots a year if required, while 5,000 civilians are already prepared to serve in an emergency.¹

Alongside these developments in Antipodean rearmament, a New Zealand Defence League has been formed, and the activities of this body have served a useful purpose in educating public opinion on the necessity of preparedness. At the well-attended inaugural meeting in March 1938, it was urged that "the man-power of the military forces should be very considerably increased, as the defending of New Zealand's long coastline must necessarily require very large forces." Another resolution called for the formation of a "Militia force of citizens over the age limit for Territorials to operate under military command."

But it may be noted that the Minister of Defence commented as follows on the League's further plea for a measure of compulsory training: "We think the force which is under training is quite adequate. After all,

¹ Op. cit.

it is a peace-time force which could be rapidly expanded in the event of emergency." The Government had a substantial basis for the view that the scope of attack on either New Zealand or Australia could not be more than a raid, Mr. Jones added. That was the view expressed at the last Imperial Conference and of the present Chief of General Staff, General Duigan.¹

3

In another place Mr. Jones confirmed this conception of a strategic policy for New Zealand. "The Government had relied upon expert advice in its defence provisions," he explained, "and it had been advised that its concern need really be only against sporadic raiders. It had accordingly acted on that advice; but if the experts should at any time consider additional measures or a variation of the method desirable, other steps would be taken with the same thoroughness."²

And this avowal must be taken to explain the equanimity with which the present New Zealand Government faces the defence situation. Although the steps taken in the last two years to improve the defences have been admirable in themselves, it is useless to pretend that they ensure this Dominion's safety in the face of determined attack or invasion. But the official view is that New Zealand would not be attacked or invaded in the event of a general war. She would only be liable to fortuitous, and, presumably, innocuous assault by half-hearted, wandering raiders. It is considered, presum-

¹ *The British Australian and New Zealander*, December 1, 1938.

² *The Dunedin Evening Star*, October 5, 1938.

ably, that New Zealand's position in any future war would be exactly the same as in the war of 1914-18.

Unfortunately the whole problem of New Zealand's strategic policy has received scanty attention from the few people really qualified to pronounce upon it; and it is likely that the official view as enunciated above will continue to command respectful attention until such time as it is summarily disproved by enemy action. But occasionally an expert has glanced at the problem. I shall quote the words of Air Commadore L. E. O. Charlton:

"If Australia were to adopt a programme of naval construction, in the mistaken notion that by such means she could secure her shores, it would not be hard for Japan to do the same and maintain predominance. But if on the other hand, Australia and New Zealand, both, were to equip their defences with an equivalent in air force, Japan could not, to any purpose, follow suit. For they would then be the Powers on the spot, operating against a sea-borne air force accommodated in carriers. While both Dominions are alive to the significance of air power, Australia lags behind her sister. New Zealand is irreproachably modern in her estimate of air power. It is true that her problem of defence, more so than with Australia, is simplified by her utter loneliness in the Southern Ocean, and the consequent ease with which she is therefore enabled to mark an invader's approach; and it is true as well that Australia is very likely to receive the impact of a blow before New Zealand does, an attempt against Singapore being a *sine qua non* before the major enterprise can be pursued. Yet even so, New Zealand is a most air-minded country. She has cast aside the theory of local defence of cities as leading to a wasted effort. Instead, she will depend on early information of the enemy approach, largely by means of a sea patrol of light surface craft, and long-range flying boats. Acting on such intelli-

gence her shore-based bombers will be directed accordingly, the intention being that they should intercept and, if possible, destroy the hostile fleet, and particularly its aircraft carriers, while it is many hundred miles away. This is surely a common-sense proceeding and New Zealand is ideally situated to put it into practice."

Such an admirable sketch for a policy would command still greater admiration if only New Zealand did possess the war planes postulated. The first-line strength of the Royal Australian Air Force will soon be 198 machines, with a personnel of nearly 3,000. This year New Zealand will take delivery of those 30 bombers, but apart from them her Air Force will still consist of a handful of obsolete aeroplanes, and its personnel will not reach the thousand mark until 1940 or after. It might be noted that a proposal has been put forward to manufacture warplanes in New Zealand, as in Australia, but one must agree with informed New Zealand critics that this is over-ambitious.¹

The fact does remain that New Zealand is still the most vulnerable unit of its size in the Empire, isolated in a potentially dangerous neighbourhood, and dependent for its very life-blood on long lines of overseas communication. Certainly the recent measures of defence reform introduced by the Government should go far to deter casual raiders in event of war, and to enable the Dominion to assume a small share of her Imperial responsibilities, but unless her defences are immensely strengthened there is no doubt that New Zealand's position would be perilous if she were, by unfortunate chance, thrown back upon her own resources.

But it is to be hoped that Commodore Charlton's

¹ The matter is dealt with more fully in Chapter 14.

admirable outline for a policy will not be overlooked by those who are in a position to give it validity. Provided with the requisite air power, in conjunction with a modest supporting naval force, New Zealand could certainly deal with large-scale invasion, especially if she collaborated wholeheartedly with her neighbour across the Tasman. In this connexion it is interesting to note that, when the New Zealand cruiser H.M.S. *Leander* recently took part in joint manœuvres with the Australian Squadron, some valuable strategic lessons were learnt.

The main purpose of these manœuvres, in which the *Leander* took part as one of a raiding squadron, was to discover how far commercial shipping on a particular route could be adequately protected. Ten warship and aircraft units were used for this purpose.

It was found that, although Australian inter-state and general overseas shipping was open to successful attack, a large proportion of a raiding fleet of the anticipated size could be destroyed. Against this, however, it was discovered that visual signalling by coastal trading vessels was not good enough, and it was suggested that this would probably apply to New Zealand or any country where peace had reigned for a long time. Another important result was that aircraft operating within a comparatively limited radius could sink an armed merchant cruiser.

When he visited New Zealand recently, Sir Charles Marr, a former Australian Minister of Defence, suggested the formation of a defence committee, representing the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, to enable complete co-operation to be effected. He suggested also that the respective Defence Ministers should exchange visits more frequently, saying that the interests

of the two Dominions were identical, and that either would help the other in the event of a war which might be at their front doors. Commenting on this suggestion, Mr. Savage, Prime Minister of New Zealand, said: "There is any amount of room for a better understanding between the two countries. Each country should know what the other is doing, and an interchange of opinion is very advisable, particularly, in defence matters."

As a result of this proposal Mr. Savage called the Pacific Conference which is being held this year, and which is discussed in the chapter entitled *The Strategy of Empire*. It can certainly be said that if New Zealand and Australia prepare close plans for co-operation, then New Zealand will be in a much better position to face the uneasy future.

4

This chapter cannot be closed, however, without a reference to the New Zealand system of compulsory military service, which was in operation until a few years ago as in Australia, and the technical details of which are given in an appendix. The New Zealand adoption of the compulsory principle in 1909 was at least partly due to the agitation of the National Defence League, a body modelled on the National Service League of Great Britain. In his excellent book *New Zealand*, Mr. W. P. Morrell has explained how the actual system of training adopted was due to a visit by Lord Kitchener, and a report by him to the Government in March 1910. For example, this extended the upper age limit from twenty-one to twenty-five, though it was necessary to placate opposition by restricting the

extension to those below twenty-one when the Act came into force.

But the system "was not one of conscription, nor anything like it: it required only a certain number of hours' drill, and a short spell in camp each year. There was some opposition on principle from Labour, and some fear in other quarters of interference with farming; but only about 5 per cent of those required to register failed to do so, and probably the only source of this difficulty was the mobile farming population. . . . The training, at any rate of the rank and file, was rudimentary only: the chief value of the scheme was that unlike the former volunteering movement, it gave New Zealand the cadres of a real military organization."

Once again this wise preparation was more than justified when the Great War demanded a heroic effort on the part of New Zealand; and once again the effect of that war was to lull New Zealanders into a false sense of eternal security, so that the scheme was modified in 1920, and temporarily abandoned at the time of the acute financial crisis in 1930.

It is significant, indeed, that whereas compulsory military training was originally instituted in New Zealand by a pre-war Radical Government, it was suspended eventually by a post-war coalition. In a frantic effort to make national ends meet the military vote was reduced by 40 per cent. Actually the entire defence system was cut down at that time until little remained save a few officers at headquarters and the secondary school cadets (O.T.C.).

But the New Zealand compulsory military training legislation remains on the Statute Book still, and the system could be reinstated at any time. Actually the New Zealand Defence League is now agitating for this,

and is supported by most military experts. Major-General Sir Andrew Russell, who commanded the New Zealand Division in France, said the other day that this Dominion was prepared neither for defence nor attack. He appealed for compulsory training for a continuous three to six months so as to create a force capable of defence or for overseas. Referring to the Dominion's defence needs, the *New Zealand Herald* stated recently that speed should be the essence of military preparations. The Government was "pre-occupied with social and economic security without national security. The Dominion at present lacks self-reliance. Isolation is no excuse."

Commenting on these statements, the New Zealand Prime Minister remarked: "I can see nothing whatever to get excited about. Statements of an excitable nature by me or anyone else do not help things. The Government is making progress all the time, and we are pushing ahead as fast as we possibly can."

Chapter 8

The Other Half

I

The safety of the Colonial Empire depends primarily on the existence of a strong Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force. Outlying territories would quickly fall prey to hungry neighbours should the Imperial forces be routed in any theatre of war. The facts that Britain can immediately send warships, detachments of soldiers and squadrons of aeroplanes to any part of the Empire that is threatened, and that in the past such protective expeditions have been uniformly successful, are potent in the eyes of a predatory but fundamentally faint-hearted world.

But this is no justification for ignoring the local defence problems of the Colonies. Supposing the British forces were not strong enough to safeguard all parts of the Empire at once? Then it would be necessary for the Colonies to extricate themselves as best they could from sudden trouble. During the Great War the Royal Navy was established on a two-Power basis. We had the Far Eastern friendship of Japan and no Italian menace in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and Africa. But our colonial campaigns were a decided nuisance, and all responsible people engaged in them will agree that much valuable man-power, money and munitions could have been saved by careful preparation.

Colonial sideshows in any future war may decide more than local issues, and therefore I suggest that expert

attention might be profitably directed towards a methodical examination of the defences of the Crown Colonies and Protectorates. Occasionally we do take cognizance of measures instituted by the overseas Dominions for their self-protection, but the equally important defence problems of the Colonial Empire have very little attention. His Majesty's Stationery Office does not possess a single publication on the subject, while the available literature in the infallible Royal Empire Society Library scarcely deserves mentioning. I had to obtain most of the figures for the following rough notes from the *Armaments Year Book* of the League of Nations.

2

The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, held in condominium by the two countries, is garrisoned by the Sudan Defence Force, organized on its present basis in 1925, recruited from Arabs, Sudanese and equatorial tribes, and staffed by British officers. At present this body has an establishment of 5,000, including about 72 British officers and 24 British N.C.O.s, and it is quartered in widely scattered garrisons and posts, from the Uganda-Kenya borders in the south to the confines of the Nubian desert in the north. There are also a reserve, and a police force of nearly five thousand men. Once it would have been possible to regard these forces as fairly adequate, but the position of the Sudan has been radically altered since the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty and the conquest of Abyssinia by Italy. The ultimate withdrawal of the British garrison from Egypt will not only affect the reinforcement of the Sudan, but will leave to the small Egyptian Army the burden of defending the Libyan

frontier against vastly superior, modernized Italian-African forces.¹

Announcing Egypt's five-year plan for the reorganization of her Army at a cost of £19,000,000, the Minister of War, Hassan Sabry Pasha, stated that in recent years there had been important changes in his country's strategic position. Formerly, the eastern and western deserts were barriers hardly penetrable by an invading force of any size, but these deserts were no longer an obstacle to aeroplanes. A.R.P. had thus become a matter of paramount importance. Egypt had now a frontier with Europe on the west and a powerful European Power bordering on the Sudan. "We are not aiming at an army on a Continental scale," declared the Minister, "because in view of our geographical situation that is not necessary, and in any case we could hardly afford it. But we have entered upon a programme which is a formidable one, especially when one realizes our military condition only two years ago, but in the organization and equipment of our defence forces great progress has already been made."²

The strategists of the Sudan must now consider the new problem of the great eastern frontier, formerly held with little difficulty against fierce but divided and ill-equipped Abyssinian tribes, but now facing the formidable army that Italy is forming by imposition of discipline, training, modern armaments and equipment on those same hardy warriors. Some people believe that this army may eventually be comparable in quality and quantity with that existing in British India. Certainly it

¹ See article by Colonel Baird-Smith in the *Army Quarterly*, April 1938.

² Article in Special Egyptian Supplement of the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, December 12, 1938.

is being, or has been, formed in 60 battalions of infantry, 6 squadrons of cavalry, 16 groups of artillery and 16 companies of engineers sufficiently mechanized and motorized to ensure rapid movement to any frontier. Of the above "25,000 will be Italian regulars and militia and 43,000 natives. An air force of 300 aeroplanes, 600 pilots and 12,000 men can give its powerful support, and carry the war by air into the heart of a neighbour's country."¹

So far as the local defence of East Africa is concerned, the King's African Rifles, administered and trained under the Colonial Office by an Inspector-General, with headquarters at the Colonial Office, has one battalion stationed in each of the territories Nyasaland Protectorate, South-West Tanganyika, Tanganyika Territory, Northern Frontier districts of Kenya, Nairobi (general reserve) and Tanganyika Territory (general reserve). This force may be called upon to serve in any part of the world, and, with the addition of the reserves and the Somaliland Camel Corps, has an establishment of some 50 British officers and other ranks and 1,100 natives.

The above-named Colonies and Protectorates also support armed police forces, while Kenya has an air unit consisting of a squadron of four flights and an headquarters flight; and recently a campaign has been launched at Nairobi to increase the size of the Kenya Regiment and improve the general organization for defence. The Governor of Kenya (Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham) stated after the Czecho-Slovakian crisis that the organization had stood the test of partial mobilization very satisfactorily; and he announced new moves to create a women's emergency

¹ See the *Morning Post*, May 24, 1937.

corps, to improve the intelligence system, and to provide an A.R.P. organization.

It must be observed, however, that the military security of Kenya is one of the greatest problems of British African defence. This colony now possesses perhaps the most uncomfortable stretch of frontier in the whole continent. As one authority has pointed out, the position of British Somaliland is bad enough, and "any Imperial map-maker can perceive how its absorption would improve the outline of the new Italian Empire."¹ But Kenya now has "a frontier with Italy twice as long as before: a consideration perhaps overlooked by those who would endow the Colony with 450 miles of German frontier as well."

An official voluntary service register was recently taken in Tanganyika, and openings for younger men are being offered in a King's African Rifles Reserve of Officers. The register also covers Naval volunteers, airmen, ground staffs, medical men, nurses, special constables and air wardens.

The West African Frontier Force, comprising the Nigeria Regiment, the Sierra Leone Battalion and the Gambia Company, together with a volunteer corps, an armed police force and rifle clubs in the various Colonies, are jointly responsible for the local defence of our possessions in West Africa. The Frontier Force, which was raised in 1901, and is composed of whole-time native troops, trained and armed like the regular army, has (or had) an establishment of 172 officers and 148 British other ranks, with 4,752 natives; and its functions have been formulated as follows: (1) For internal security. (2) To provide a striking force to deal with inter-tribal troubles or insurrections. (3) To provide a striking force

¹ See note on p. 125.

to assist in case of trouble in any neighbouring West African colonies. (4) To provide the nucleus for expansion in case of war. A Nigerian Territorial Reserve for Africans has recently been formed; and it is planned to raise a Nigerian Marine Reserve also.

Under Article 4 of the relevant Mandate, the military training of natives in the Mandated Territory of South-West Africa, otherwise than for the purposes of internal police or local defence, is prohibited; and the Mandatory, in this case the Union of South Africa, may not establish military or naval bases or fortifications. Therefore no military forces are maintained in South-West Africa, but all adult European males are liable to serve in protection of the territory in what is known as the Burgher Force. Approximately seven thousand persons would be so liable, and most of these have had some form of training, principally in marksmanship. The strength of the armed South-West African Police Force is about 500. Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland, it may be noted, have no military forces, but Swaziland has a rifle club with 272 members, while all the Protectorates support armed constabularies.

Northern Rhodesia really comes under any East African scheme. The Northern Rhodesian Regiment, organized and maintained as an ordinary infantry regiment, has an establishment of 10 British officers and 7 British N.C.O.s, with 401 native rank and file. The Government's five-year development plan includes the expansion and re-equipment of these forces, and a European volunteer defence force of 400 men, staffed by Regular Army instructors, is being established. There is an armed police force. But Southern Rhodesia, with greater responsibilities, maintains not only a permanent force of 32 officers and 508 other ranks, with

reserves, but also a Territorial force and reserves of 34 officers and 466 other ranks, besides a reserve of officers, a cadet corps and a semi-military police force of 1,430 officers and men (Europeans armed with rifles, Vickers and Lewis guns). A small air unit has recently been formed.

The stated functions of the Southern Rhodesian Defence Corps are to provide policing for the Colony, a striking force in case of emergency, and a whole-time personnel for organizing and training the Territorials. In an important statement of policy, the Southern Rhodesian Minister for Justice and Defence (the Hon. R. C. Tredgold) pointed out in April 1938 that the Colony had limited resources for defence purposes, but had already assumed the responsibility for internal defence in its entirety. With regard to Imperial defence, the Colony had already forwarded "the broad outlines of a scheme to London, which, if accepted, would involve no inconsiderable expenditure." But the Colony was unanimous "in favour of making a contribution to Imperial defence."¹

Within one week of a recent appeal for a battalion to serve outside the Colony, 350 Europeans had applied for forms at Salisbury and 300 at Bulawayo. The population of each town is about 12,000. In spite of the age limit of forty-five, men up to seventy-six asked for forms.

It cannot be said that African colonists need informing about their vulnerability. They are fully alive to the potential danger of their position, and would willingly co-operate with the Imperial Government in any large-scale scheme. One of the most interesting suggestions of recent times was that put forward by a well-known resident of Uganda concerning the formation of an

¹ See *Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire*, October 1938.

Imperial force for Africa. This gentleman, Mr. R. W. Fraser, urged the creation of a force officered by men who were prepared to spend their active lives in Africa. At present, he said, the King's African Rifles, the West African Frontier Force and the other regular forces in the African dependencies were officered by secondment from the British Army. Officers returned to their regiments just as they were beginning to learn the language, to know the country and to understand the African. What was needed was an Imperial force on the lines of the Indian Army, which would offer a whole-time career.¹

It is significant that Colonel C. M. Newman, one of Rhodesia's most experienced volunteer soldiers and a prominent city councillor, has stated publicly that if Tanganyika were restored to Germany, then Rhodesia, Kenya and Uganda would be compelled to make huge increases in their defences. Rhodesia might have to spend £2,000,000 to maintain a native army of 100,000 men.²

3

At the present time it is difficult to discuss the Mandated Territories of Palestine and Trans-Jordan, although it might be mentioned that under normal conditions Palestine has a military police force of 3,216 all ranks, and Trans-Jordan a Frontier Force of 1,053, together with a police force (the Arab Legion) of 897.

Aden depends for protection on the Navy—indeed, it is potentially one of our most important naval stations—but also has a little army, the Aden Protectorate Levies,

¹ See the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, December 5, 1938.

² See the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, November 10, 1938.

two hundred officers and men, organized in an infantry company, and a machine-gun troop. But no armed forces as such may be maintained within the limits of the Protectorate. Therefore the Levies are stationed in the British territorial zone known as the Aden Settlement Area, and are primarily intended for the defence of that territory. Nevertheless, it is fairly certain that they would be available for employment in the Protectorate at large should an emergency arise.

Similarly Ceylon relies largely upon the Navy, but the Ceylon Defence Force, with 184 officers and 3,124 men, may be called out in emergency by the Governor for active service in any part of the Colony under the command of officers of his Majesty's regular forces. In the last year Ceylon has provided Rs. 4,448,830 for defence, an increase of nearly Rs. 2,000,000, "largely due to the increase in the military contribution," according to an official statement. A comprehensive scheme of passive air defence has been devised for Colombo, and a Man-Power Board has prepared a national register of those willing to serve, both in the Colony and overseas.

Very soon a new naval and air base is to be established at Trincomalee, Ceylon, the large and exceptionally beautiful harbour which has been described by the Admiralty as one of the most perfect in the world; and this project, to cost £1,500,000, will undoubtedly strengthen our hand considerably in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. Trincomalee was originally fortified and used as a naval base by the Dutch, but fell into disuse after 1795 when the British took possession of Ceylon. The large Sunderland flying boats of the R.A.F. general reconnaissance squadron based on Singapore were busy during the latter part of 1938 in surveying trans-ocean routes between that place and

Trincomalee. In the course of what was officially described as a routine training exercise, they flew from Singapore to Penang and thence across 1,400 miles of open sea to Trincomalee, subsequently returning via Colombo and Penang. As one authority has pointed out, the great strategical value of Trincomalee as a half-way base on the route from Aden to Singapore is now fully recognized. "It may become of even more importance if the Japanese succeed in persuading Siam to let them cut a canal through Siamese territory, in the Malay peninsula, which would have the effect of 'by-passing' Singapore."¹

Hong Kong depends normally upon a Volunteer Defence Corps, established from time to time. This consists of one battery, one engineer company, one armoured car section, three machine-gun companies, one machine-gun troop, one motor machine-gun section, one infantry company and services. There is also the Hong Kong armed police force of 1,906 all ranks. As a result of recent events, however, a comprehensive defence plan has been formulated, involving an expenditure of £200,000. It is expected that by the middle of 1939 the Colony will have a complete A.R.P. organization, with one thousand posts manned by 5,000 men and 3,000 women air-raid wardens. It was revealed recently that the Hong Kong Government has contributed a total of £3,000,000 to the Imperial Government over the last ten years for Imperial defence. Last year's total of £390,000 is the highest on record. It represents an increase of 100 per cent since 1929.

In fact, the outstanding lesson of a survey such as

¹ See article by Group-Captain L. G. S. Payne in the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, December 17, 1938.

this is that the Colonies are only too willing to help themselves and the Mother Country if given the opportunity. In November 1938 the Straits Settlements Legislative Council voted £1,166,000 to the British Exchequer for Imperial defence, this sum being in addition to the annual contribution of £466,000. Not content with this, and with the Singapore Base, the Colony supports a volunteer force, an armed police force of 4,130 all ranks, and has recently formed a Volunteer Air Force and a Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. A man-power register has been taken.

As for the Federated Malay States, they have various volunteer forces, with a proportion of European officers, and an armed police force of 4,082 all ranks. The Unfederated States have strong local contingents, of which the Johore Military Force, under the control of the Sultan, with an establishment of 34 officers and 612 men, is the most important. There is also an armed police force of 2,675 officers and men in the States; while British North Borneo has a similar force of 510, and Sarawak of 855. New Guinea and Papua come under the Australian defence scheme, and Samoa is the charge of New Zealand. Seychelles has an armed police force of 88 and Mauritius of 574, while Fiji supports a defence force of 13 officers and 402 men, and an armed police force of 213 officers and men. The Gilbert and Ellice Island Colony has a miniature defence and police force, and the Solomon Islands Protectorate has an armed constabulary of 126 officers and men.

To review the forces of the West Indies in similar fashion would only be to prolong unnecessarily a verbal agony. Each colony has its small militia and police, at present sufficient for local needs, but in most cases capable of considerable expansion. British Guiana is

similarly served. Island-wide representations were recently made to the Imperial Government for the re-establishment of the historic West India Regiment in Jamaica. Newfoundland, that Dominion in abeyance, has no military organization at all, according to information available at the time of writing; while the Mediterranean colonies of Malta and Cyprus have in the one case the Royal Malta Artillery with 22 officers and 417 men in three heavy batteries, the Royal Engineers (Militia) Malta Division with 94 all ranks, and the King's Own Malta Regiment with 21 officers and 640 other ranks. Cyprus has a police force of 725 all ranks, armed with rifles, pistols and Lewis guns. Gibraltar is an outpost of the British forces, but has taken a man-power register, established an A.R.P. organization, and formed a Gibraltar Defence Force; while the Channel Islands are near enough to home.

As for India and Eire, both occupying exceedingly difficult positions from the viewpoint of classification, these are dealt with in the next chapter.

4

The purpose of the present chapter has been to provide some scanty information about the defence forces of the Colonial Empire, partly in the hope that others might think it worth while to institute a proper investigation. But a few conclusions may be drawn from the facts that have been given.

It has been shown that the principal Colonies possess some kind of independent and local defensive organization, but that in most cases this is adequate only for maintaining law and order within the territory con-

cerned, and would patently be inadequate to resist a powerful aggressor. Moreover, it does seem that most of the colonial forces are organized along outmoded lines. No British colony has a military organization to compare with those developed by the Italians in Libya and Abyssinia. But the various colonists themselves are eager to take part in the defence of their territories, and even to assist generously in any general scheme of Imperial defence. This spirit would seem to extend to the native populations, in most cases the rank-and-file of the forces.

It might be suggested therefore that although the Colonies are not at present in a position to defend themselves, they should, given financial encouragement and practical instruction, be able eventually to harness their huge native man-power and even become valuable military allies to the Mother Country. But this instruction and encouragement should be based on modern needs and developments. It is believed that the colonists themselves would enthusiastically welcome any departure of the kind, which might be complementary to the general agricultural and industrial development of the territories. The construction of strategical communications and the mechanization of forces would dovetail nicely into civil developments. And Mr. Fraser's suggestion for the establishment of an Imperial force in colonial Africa is certainly worth studying.

Chapter 9

India and Eire.

I

India and Eire are difficult. They are difficult to classify, discuss, satisfy, understand, and in any case, they are difficult. That is why I have given them a chapter to themselves. Undoubtedly the people who at present rule both countries will want to know why I have dared to include them in this book at all. The India of Congress has declared that it has no interest in the defence plans of the British Empire, while the Eire of Fianna Fail has said that it has no kind of interest in the British Empire whatsoever. Let the facts presented in this chapter be the justification for my impertinence.

India is neither a Dominion nor a Colony, a nation, nor, for that matter, a country in the strict sense of the geographical term. It is essentially a sub-continent, covering a total area of over 1,500,000 square miles, and containing a population of approximately 350,000,000. That is, India covers three times the combined area of France, Germany and Italy, and contains three times as many people as France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway combined. These people represent so many diverse races and creeds that to enumerate them would require several hours with the encyclopaedia, and I haven't that time.

Moreover, India possesses a coastline over 7,000 miles

long, and land frontiers exceeding 3,000 miles in dangerous length. Throughout the ages these inviting characteristics have made India peculiarly liable to invasion; but again, to detail the successive invasions would require infinite calculation. For the purposes of the present study it is most significant to note that prior to the British protection of India, every invasion, whether by sea or land, was initially successful.

India has pursued its daily livelihood in comparative peace for over a century and a half, an inestimable advantage, and one that has been accorded very few countries or sub-continent during the time. The British occupation has been responsible for this. It is true that the British have exacted substantial tribute in return, but they have not abused the privilege, and their extraordinary efforts to educate and elevate the Indian are without parallel in the history of conquest—and all history is the history of conquest.

It is the avowed British policy to make India stand on her own feet, so that eventually she may not only have complete independence, but she may also be able to keep it. The recent accordance of partial self-government to India is a striking earnest of this policy. It would be far easier to rule India by force alone than to conduct this difficult, thankless, dangerous and disinterested game of moral spoon-feeding.

That policy was partly rewarded in the Great War when India supplied very nearly one million combatants. But more than half of these came from the martial Punjab, which contains less than 8 per cent of the Indian population. The provinces of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and the Central Provinces, with over 100,000,000 people, furnished less than 25,000. India's war-time effort was stirring and remarkable, but confined to

those very Indian races that would have us continue our former benevolent despotism. Those are the races that redeem India in the eyes of history and the world, and that have always had universal respect. The others—those races that did not assist us in the Great War, that would have stabbed us in the back if they had been given the opportunity, and that seek to overthrow our power in India at the present day—have a very different historical record and modern reputation.

Thanks to their numerical superiority; and to their superior gift of the gab, a gift that is scorned by the physically stronger races of the North and the sturdy Mahrattas of the Deccan, the inferior Indian races have the most to say. But it is certain that if Britain withdrew her protection from India, these people would be the first to run for the shelter that they would not find. Thus would they betray India as they seek to betray her.

That intention is openly admitted at every sitting of Congress, and is specially advanced in the Congress refusal to co-operate with the British in the strengthening of India's defences. But these defences must be strengthened. The Japanese Alliance freed us from great responsibility in the Pacific during 1914-18, but India, which lies midway between the Pacific and Europe, would be dangerously situated in another war. I quote the authoritative opinion of Sir William Barton:

"Britain could no longer ensure that her (India's) coasts would be immune from invasion unless India herself were able to render substantial help." The Indian Army should be mechanized to guarantee India's territorial integrity in another war, and "a powerful Air Force should be based on Southern India, from which position it would be able to ward off attacks on the Indian coasts and support Aden,

Singapore and Hong Kong. It would also be available if a dangerous situation were to develop on the North-West Frontier."¹

2

The defence forces of India to-day comprise a standing Army of approximately 55,000 British and 160,000 Indian troops, backed by a large reserve. Co-operating with these at the time of writing are some eight squadrons of the Royal Air Force. A special naval squadron backed by the whole power of the Royal Navy affords protection from sea-borne attack, but as this indispensable watchdog is Britain's charge and expense, it can hardly be described as part of India's defence structure.

The land forces are maintained largely at India's expense, although Britain contributes an annual grant of £2,000,000, and occasionally provides a great deal of capital equipment. Her defence costs India only two shillings per head of population, as compared with five pounds per head in Britain and two pounds in Japan even in normal times. The Indian defence forces are needed for three main purposes:

1. They must protect India from invasion by land. Throughout the centuries this unwieldy, wealthy and dissolute prize of the nations has been highly vulnerable at the North-West Frontier, narrowed down by nature to the famous Khyber Pass. Most European conquerors have taken advantage of this Achilles' heel. In our time Germany has designed to penetrate the Middle East and afterwards invade India by this route; even at the present day strategists must take note of the fact

¹ Article in the *Empire Review*, May 1938.

that the Russian railheads at Termez on the Oxus and at Kushk Post north of Herat are but 300 and 400 miles respectively from the Indian railheads in the Khyber.

A bare twenty years ago strong Afghan forces crossed this frontier with the object of taking India, and it was necessary to concentrate 200,000 British and Indian troops to repel them. At the time of writing about four divisions and five cavalry brigades are allocated to the task of meeting and defeating possible invasion. They are stationed at various garrisons throughout India, and comprise what is technically known as the Field Army. About a third of the defence forces are so organized.

2. But the defence of the North-West Frontier is by no means the only function of the Indian military machine. The maintenance of order or the suppression of disorder among the frontier tribes is equally important. Frontier forts and stations are accordingly manned with what are known as Covering Troops. The strength of about two divisions is employed for the purpose, and the troops are stationed all along the frontier, from Chitral, to the Zhob Valley, including strong garrisons in the Khyber Pass and in Waziristan, backed by reserves in Peshawar, Nowshera and Kohat.

It has often been necessary in recent years to summon Field Army brigades to reinforce these garrisons, which, in Sir Ronald Charles' words, indicates the probable necessity of "the reinforcement of the Army in India from without, should an extensive border rising coincide with an attempted invasion of India through or by Afghanistan."¹

3. Finally the Indian defence forces must maintain internal security, particularly in certain areas that are

¹ Article in *Rising Strength*, August 1938.

prone to communal strife. This was the first duty of the British in India, and is still the most important, for the passing of time seems rather to accentuate than to dispel the bitter hatreds and internecine conflicts of this people. More than half the British infantry battalions stationed in India are earmarked for the duty, and also a substantial number of Indian cavalry and infantry units.

Sir Ronald Charles comments usefully on this function: "The high proportion of British troops allotted to the duty of internal security is based upon their admitted impartiality when dealing with communal disturbances. They are unaffected by the religious or the political issues which have led to the outbreak of disorder, while their high standard of discipline and self-restraint combined with their unfailing good humour almost invariably enable them to suppress disorder without resort to bloodshed."¹

Thus the greater part of the British troops are in any case needed for what amount to ordinary police purposes. At the very time last year when the All-India Assembly was passing a resolution for the withdrawal of the Imperial forces from India, British soldiers were patrolling the streets of Delhi with machine guns to prevent Hindus and Moslems from killing each other.

It has been justly said that the presence of the British Army is mainly due to the obligation which we have entered into with the peoples of British India—that we will maintain the rule of law which alone enables peaceful citizens to follow their occupations and to enjoy the amenities of life without disturbance and interruption.

¹ Op. cit.

But the problems involved in these ticklish functions are many and involved. The position of the North-West Frontier alone is very difficult. Sir William Barton observes that unless the frontier tribes can be induced to co-operate with the Indian Empire, over a third of the Indian Army will be required to maintain peace on the border, while at times nearly half the Army might be required. If, as might be the case, the tribes were loyal to the Indian Government, a large proportion of the troops now allotted to border protection could be relegated to positions more in accordance with the needs of modern strategy.

Sir William Barton's opinion is therefore quite definite: "The British Government will almost certainly demand that in the interests of military efficiency a comprehensive policy of pacification of the Frontier tribesmen shall be initiated."¹

Other critics consider that the best method is to take the sting out of the frontier tribes by building roads and offering the tribesmen employment on their construction; and this school of thought also considers that if we continue our policy of gradual concession to the political demands of Congress, we must eventually convince disaffected opinion of our fundamental good faith, and thus enlist it on our side.

Now this is a policy that we should all like to see in operation—successful operation, that is. Concession costs so little in the short run, and does appeal to the easy-going coward in us all. Besides, it flatters our sense of moral righteousness.

But the present state of the world is such that we

¹ Article in the *Empire Review*, May 1938.

cannot afford to continue this policy unless Congress is ready to meet us on the defence issue at once and unequivocally. Would Congress be thus willing? Pandit Nehru, the leader, made the following statement at the time of the first Czecho-Slovakian crisis: "We are not going to be pawns in imperialist adventures, nor are we prepared to help the Government which will betray democracy whenever they have a chance to do so."¹ It is probable that the Pandit's Party would slink to earth in a real crisis, and India's stronger and wiser leaders, the Muslims, the martial races of the North, and the Princes would more than make up for their deficiency. But can we afford to leave that important issue anything but cut-and-dried?

Admittedly we have taken active steps in the last year to improve the technical condition of India's defences. Plans for reorganization and strengthening of the defences were announced simultaneously by the British and Indian Governments towards the end of 1938, and an Expert Committee under Lord Chatfield subsequently investigated the military and financial aspects of defence problems on the spot. The findings of this Committee have not been published at the time of writing, and may not be announced in detail for obvious reasons, but it is generally acknowledged that they involve far-reaching proposals for technical reorganization, and a rough outline may be given of their scope.

The experts paid particular attention to frontier problems, such as mechanization, aerial limitations, the need for special training, and major strategical possibilities in view of political tendencies. They visited Calcutta, where air raid precautions have been actively

¹ See the *Statesman*, September 29, 1938.

organized, and they studied the defence needs of the city and port in relation to international developments. Authorities were consulted on coastal defences, internal security and finance, while a large number of non-officials were interviewed to enable the Committee to form an estimate of the future political and constitutional outlook.

In the meantime the British Government has increased its annual grant to the Indian Government for defence purposes from £1,500,000 to £2,000,000, and a capital grant up to £5,000,000 has been made for the re-equipment of certain British and Indian units. Four British battalions have been transferred from the Indian to the Imperial establishments, a move of doubtful wisdom. The Governor-General's Secretariat has been increased by the addition of a Secretary for Defence Co-ordination in the person of Mr. A. De C. Williams, whose important task will be the correlation of supply and demand in respect of production, imports, transport, prices and distribution for both civil and military needs.

Undoubtedly India will soon be stronger than she has ever been in her history. It is inconceivable that the result of the very able Lord Chatfield's mission will not be an immense strengthening of the military organization as such. It is probable that the Indian Army will be brought more directly under the control of the War Office, which will facilitate strategic disposition. The Secretary for War, Mr. Hore-Belisha, has himself pointed out that "the rigidity imposed on a Commander-in-Chief by the predetermination of the number and establishment of units in India is crippling to any plans for the reorganization of the Empire defences."¹

¹ *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, February 2, 1929.

In a later chapter I point out that Britain was offered the unconditional help of the invaluable Punjab during the first Czecho-Slovakian crisis. The Indian Princes have shown equal loyalty. I quote the words of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who is peculiarly qualified to pronounce upon the subject:

"The Indian Princes, as in the past War, have during the recent crisis hastened to a man to place their troops and the resources of their States at the service of the King-Emperor. The Princes are devoted to the British Throne and proud of being, in oriental phrase 'Pillars of the Empire.' Moreover, the splendid martial races, the Muhammedans, Sikhs, Jats and Rajputs of the Punjab and the adjoining districts of the United Provinces, the hardy Mahrattas of Bombay—in fact the men who count in a crisis—will, if given the right lead, regardless of the Congress opposition, again prove themselves true to their salt and rally to the colours."¹

But can we expect to preserve the loyalty of these straight-thinking, eminently sensible people if we do not give them the lead? And what will all the technical reorganization of the Indian defences avail us if we continue to build upon an insecure political foundation?

In the present situation it is essential that we rule India with a firm hand. We must tell Congress plainly and unequivocally that we are the masters in India, and intend to remain so until such time as they are willing to co-operate with us wholeheartedly. This is not Imperialism, but the common instinct of self-preservation. And who wants to commit suicide?

¹ Article in the *Indian Empire Review*, December 1938.

4

Perhaps it was unwise to couple Eire with India, for the positions of the two countries are, on careful analysis, essentially dissimilar. Apart from the different geographical and constitutional positions, Eire has been inspired by the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1938, and by events during the last year, to adopt a far more magnanimous attitude towards its old enemy, which is heartily reciprocated in the United Kingdom.

The Irish Army has been described by an Irishman as homogeneous and national in a special sense—but a sense that is possibly not obvious in the first instance to non-technical minds. The remark was intended to apply in particular to the Regular cadres, officers, N.C.O.s and long-service soldiers.

“The vast majority of these have met and collaborated in various professional works for the past half-dozen years, and principally at the Curragh as the one great training centre. The common sentiment and outlook has spread by periodical transfers—and during the last three years by various types of Reserve Training. The Regular cadres thus provide a leaven to inform the mass as a whole.”¹

But the chief difficulty of the military organizers has been lack of finance—the fraction of the National Budget applied to defence is still very small, one of the smallest percentages in the world—and consequently the cadres are not very numerous. In event of hostilities the Irish Army would be fused into a whole, but at present it is divided into the Regular Army, the Reserve and the Volunteer Reserve.

¹ Article by Colonel J. J. O'Connell, M.A., in *The Irish Free State Official Handbook*, 1932.

The object of the Regular Army in peace-time is to provide the necessary executive and administrative personnel for the Defence Forces in general, personnel for schools and training establishments, and demonstration units of all corps and services for training purposes, and units for garrison duty. In war-time the Force would provide the framework on which the Defence Forces would be mobilized.

Undoubtedly the Regular Army is in the main a long-service force of high quality. Natural wastage is compensated for by a steady trickle of enlistment, and, owing to the small numbers required annually, it is possible to insist on a high general standard. The budgetary effective strength of the Regular Army for 1938-39 was 585 officers, 1,454 N.C.O.s and 4,346 privates, a total of 6,385.

The Reserve is divided into two classes, of which Class A comprises regular soldiers who have completed their period of service with the Regular Army, and have been transferred to the Reserve. The Class B reserve consists of short-service troops who have undertaken a definite liability for part-time service in peace-time. Both the classes are officered from the Reserve of Officers, and the force has been described as "a sort of militia," possessing a remarkably high standard of cohesion and training, considering the facilities available for its embodiment and instruction. The complement of Class A for 1938-39 was 702 N.C.O.s, and 4,798 privates; and of Class B, 98 N.C.O.s and 327 privates.

The Volunteer Force is entirely a part-time force for all ranks. This is the newest part of the Irish Army, and its object is to provide the bulk of the forces required on mobilization. With it may be coupled the

Officers' Training Corps at the several universities, and, to a certain extent, the Class B reserve. The Volunteer Reserve resembles in principle the United States National Guard and the British Territorials. There is the difference that better facilities exist for recruiting for the commissioned ranks of the Regular Army therefrom. The total strength in 1937-38 was 15,300, but this had fallen to only 12,800 in 1938-39.

"The underlying principle of the whole system is that there should always be available sufficient cadres to enlist, train, encadre, assimilate and staff a force of adequate power to defend the country from external aggression. Since only service at home is contemplated, it is calculated that a certain minimum time would be available to do this; and, unquestionably, the machinery for the purpose is in process of development. It is not possible just yet to say the same about the question of supplying the forces so raised and trained."¹

In addition to the above-mentioned forces, one must take into consideration the Military Police, about 200 men, and the Civic Guard, an armed police force of 1,243 sergeants and 6,000 guards. The Air Corps, according to the latest information available at the time of writing, had a total of 284 all ranks and 16 machines, of which six only were capable of being used in war as operational units.

But recent events have stirred the Government of Eire to a keen sense of their defence responsibilities. In the Dail a few months ago Mr. de Valera admitted that if Britain were involved in war, Eire could not hope to remain neutral. Therefore she was making her own defence plans to meet such an emergency. Eire,

¹ Op. cit.

said Mr. de Valera, would have to continue sending food to Britain, and that circumstance would undoubtedly cause her to be put in the position of a combatant by any nation at war with Britain.

"Britain's enemy would regard it as a vital part of the campaign to prevent ships loaded with food reaching English ports. That enemy would have for its chief object the bombing of Irish ports, to make it impossible for Irish supplies to be sent out."¹ Accordingly Mr. de Valera announced that his Government was taking "all defensive measures" to protect its territory against such attack, and intended to bring in an enhanced Defence Estimate of £5,500,000. It has since been announced that the new money will be spent on raising the Army strength to 30,000, and to organizing a defensive air force, anti-aircraft and mine-sweeper services, and air, land and coastal mobile military patrols.

This statement confirmed the impression gained by General Sir Hubert Gough when he had a personal interview with Mr. de Valera last November. "Mr. de Valera raised the question of the defences of Eire," said the General. "He appeared to be somewhat anxious about them, as he did not think they were quite at the best stage of efficiency. He talked about improving the general defensive organization of Eire."²

The gesture of the British Government in withdrawing protection from the treaty ports of Eire has already borne fruit. For the first time in hundreds of years Southern Ireland has assumed the entire responsibility for her territorial integrity. But, as Mr. de Valera tacitly admitted in the above declaration, Eire is economically part of the British system, and in event

¹ The *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, February 17, 1939.

² *Ibid.*, November 5, 1938.

of war the trade of Eire and the United Kingdom would have to continue. It is obvious, therefore, that neither country can afford to leave their mutual defence systems unco-ordinated and unrelated. A further gesture from either side might lead to a common-sense arrangement, whereby Eire would be saved a great deal of money that she cannot afford to spend, Great Britain would be relieved of an anxiety and chance would cease to be the uncertain arbiter that it is at present.

That is the chief lesson of this chapter. India and Eire have both been "difficult" countries. But firm and wise statesmanship is that which transcends difficulties in a crisis, and steers all men, of whatever creed or race, through immediate and common-sense co-operation to mutual safety.

Chapter 10

Communications

I

If an empire as distinct from a kingdom or republic may be defined as a collection of geographically divided nations under one central authority, then the importance of the lines of communication joining the separate parts becomes specially apparent. Cut those lines and the empire is torn asunder. Because the Romans recognized this outstanding fact they were successful empire-builders. After the legionaries came the road-makers, for, to quote Trevelyan, the Roman method was "to make military roads, planned on system for the whole island (Britannia) and to plant along them forts garrisoned by the regular troops." Thus forces could be moved rapidly to any threatened point.

But no sooner had those forces been withdrawn, and those vital lines of communication left unguarded, than the Roman Empire crashed.

The principle has lost none of its early significance, for the very existence of the modern British Empire depends upon the maintenance of secure lines of sea communication. The parts of the British Empire have become so economically and politically interdependent that the loss or injury of one would seriously if not irrevocably damage all the others. Let it be remembered always that of the food Great Britain eats alone, 50,000 tons has to be brought every day from overseas. About forty weeks of our yearly supply of wheat has to be

imported. Two-fifths of the beef we eat comes from abroad, as does half our consumption of mutton and lamb. Three-quarters of our butter, and all our tea, cocoa and coffee are imported.¹

For their essential raw materials, our industries are also dependent on supplies from abroad, the maintenance of which, in turn, depends on free sea communications. We import twelve million tons of ores and metals for our heavy industries. We require from abroad vast quantities of cotton, wool, rubber and so on. For petrol, fuel oil and other oils, we are almost entirely dependent on imports from overseas. If these supplies ever fail us, we are beaten, since we shall not have sufficient materials for guns, munitions and equipment generally.

Let us consider one vital Imperial communication in particular, and its importance to the safety of the home country and the overseas Empire alike. This is the Eastern route via the Mediterranean Sea and the Suez Canal. It is lightly assumed by some people that in case of difficulties we could divert our Eastern trade round the Cape of Good Hope without serious embarrassment, and that we could even abandon the Mediterranean route without great loss. What would this entail?

First, we would need many more ships to carry the same trade by the Cape, and we are short of ships. "In ships alone the effect would be, in the case of India, that nine ships would be required for every five required by the Mediterranean route, for Australia eight ships for every seven, and for Hong Kong and Singapore four ships for every three."²

Second, abandonment of the Mediterranean route

¹ See *Defence and Freedom*, an invaluable pamphlet issued by the Army and Home and Empire Defence League.

² See Cole's *Imperial Military Geography*, ninth edition, September 1937.

would not only partially isolate us from India and the Indian Army, the Singapore Base, Australia and New Zealand, but it would for ever destroy our power and prestige in the Near East. Mussolini would have Egypt Palestine and Iraq at his feet, and nothing between his legions, ships and aeroplanes and Tunisia. We have a duty to our ally France, who derives more than 50 per cent of her oil imports from the Eastern Mediterranean. But what about our own oil supplies? The Royal Navy would be largely immobilized without the oil from Haifa and Abadan.

Indeed, the question is scarcely worth discussing, for we shall never abandon the Mediterranean route and the Suez Canal—so long as we can fight for them.

That brilliant writer, Air-Commodore L. E. O. Charlton, has concisely summarized the effects of disintegration of our power in the Mediterranean. He says that

“if it fell apart owing to successful enemy action in that sea, so that our garrisons were cut off from reinforcement and the territory overrun, it would be a blow to our prestige and a material loss which might disintegrate the Empire. It would mean, in fact, the neat removal from the girdling world chain of a middle piece consisting of the Mediterranean, 2,000 miles in length, and of all that part of the land-bridge between the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea and the head waters of the Persian Gulf which forms a vital communicating link 'twixt East and West. In analogy the effect would be that of the sudden elimination of Clapham Junction as a uniquely important traffic link on the Southern Railway system.”¹

Now let us consider the effect of a severance of Imperial communications upon a typical Dominion.

¹ See article in the *Fortnightly*, March 1938.

A good example is afforded by Australia. Her very existence depends upon export. Yet to dispose of Australia's surplus products and to bring necessary purchases home, ships must travel round the world. The stoppage of this Dominion's overseas trade, valued last year at more than £250,000,000, would have severe repercussions on her national economy, with a consequent train of ruin, distress and unemployment. In addition, her external credit and the capacity to supplement her local resources in time of emergency by access to vital sources of overseas supplies, would be gravely prejudiced. Australia's coastal trade is also of great importance, as its volume is slightly larger than the overseas trade, and freedom of movement by sea is essential to its continuance, even allowing that part might be diverted to rail transport.

India has only four ports at immense distances apart, Karachi, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, and trade worth £400,000,000 a year. Australia has only four ports, Fremantle, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney at immense distances apart and overseas trade worth over £250,000,000. The same tale applies to most parts of the British Empire. Great Britain's trade with the Mediterranean alone is worth £200,000,000 a year.

But maintenance of Imperial communications is also essential to the political integrity of the Empire. We can protect the Dominions and Colonies only if we have a clear road across the oceans to their side; they can help us with men and materials only if that road is clear. It is essential that we dominate certain oceans, seas and seaboard. But we cannot rule the waves unless we also command an uninterrupted passage from shore to shore.

There are five main sea routes of paramount importance to the British Empire. They are:

1. The North Atlantic run from Britain to North America, 2,500 miles. This carries most traffic and was particularly vulnerable to raiders and submarines during the Great War. During the next war it may be more adequately protected, but will still be highly vulnerable at the European end. The focal waters of the Atlantic just west of Ireland, the Irish Sea and the English Channel will be infested with mines, submarines, surface raiders and warplanes, and will need to be constantly patrolled. These waters also mark the beginning or end of all the other vital routes. Undoubtedly they represent the weakest link in the Imperial chain, for if they were made untenable, then the homeward-bound ships could not reach port, nor could the outward-bound ships leave port.

2. The route through the Mediterranean Sea and the Suez Canal to the Orient and Australasia, serving the Near East, the Middle East, India and Malaya, 9,000 miles to Hong Kong, 11,000 to Sydney. I have already dwelt on the Mediterranean problem. This line also has tender ends. We should concentrate on protecting the Mediterranean and the Singapore-Hong Kong ends.

3. The Cape of Good Hope route is an alternative to the Mediterranean, 3,000 miles longer to Hong Kong, 1,000 miles shorter to Sydney. We forget sometimes that this line is also extremely important in that it serves the Cape, and the eastern and western coasts of the African continent. It is most vulnerable along

the section from London River to the Canaries, but would soon bristle with danger-points if hostile Powers were permitted to build bases on the African coasts.

4. The Panama route is also an alternative to the Mediterranean line to the Far East and Australia, and is the established line to New Zealand, 11,000 miles. Again, this is a route which may be regarded as safe except at the European beginning and the Oriental end. America is strengthening the defences of the Panama Canal, and considering the construction of a second canal, through Nicaragua, which would finally ensure the safety of commerce passing between the two oceans.

5. The Cape Horn route is an alternative to Panama, but longer. It has some potential importance, because it is reasonably safe, and serves the South American republics, particularly the Argentine, source of food-stuffs and raw materials.

In the scheme of Imperial defence these routes are protected by the Home and Mediterranean Fleets and by local squadrons such as the China Squadron, that work in co-operation with the naval units of the Dominions. The North America and West Indies Squadron, based on Bermuda, is required to guard the North Atlantic and Panama routes. The East Indies Squadron, based on Trincomalee, covers the Eastern route through the Indian Ocean, while the China Squadron, based on Hong Kong, protects the Oriental end. The Cape route at its southern loop is covered by the African Station, based on Simons-town.

Then Imperial air-lines run contiguously with most of the sea routes, and, while supplementing them for the purpose of quick communications, also have stra-

ategic importance. The aerodromes and other services would be useful for sending reinforcements of materials, men and aircraft from one part of the Empire to another, as from Australia to Singapore, Singapore to Ceylon, South Africa to the Sudan. The new Imperial Airways line from Khartoum to West Africa has been described as the third most important strategic air line of the Empire. If the Red Sea proved dangerous, we could use this route to transport troops from the home country to the Sudan via Freetown in Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, Nigeria and Darfur.¹ But the latest project is to establish an alternative air route from Australia to Britain via Cocos Island, Diego Garcia Island, Seychelles and Kenya. Very soon Imperial Airways will be operating a service from New Zealand to Canada, and then it will be possible to travel from London to her furthestmost Antipodes in little more than a week.

3

What are the chief menaces to these remarkable and important communications?

The general opinion is that massed attack on the main sea routes will be unlikely. Britain and her allies will possess a preponderance of heavy naval power. The principal threat will be offered by small surface craft and submarines, and from the air. Since Germany has determined to amass an aggregate submarine tonnage equal to that of the British Empire, our potential

¹ See article by Mr. G. L. Steer in the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, March 14, 1939.

enemies will soon possess a grand total of about three hundred U-boats, as follows:

			<i>U-Boats built and building</i>	<i>Projected</i>	<i>Total</i>
Germany	..	..	71	10	81
Italy	..	..	123	—	123
Japan	..	..	70	—	70
Grand total					274

Mr. Hector C. Bywater, perhaps our greatest living naval publicist, takes a particularly grave view of this development. He has said:

“This immense armada of foreign submarines is distributed over areas which are of vital strategical importance in relation to the communications of the British Commonwealth. A substantial proportion of them are ocean-going vessels with a cruising radius up to 12,000 miles or more, and there is hardly any point on the 85,000-mile trade routes of the Commonwealth which could not be reached by the U-boats of one or other of the three Powers named. In the last war the submarine menace was confined mainly to home waters and the Mediterranean. In a future struggle it might become virtually world-wide.”¹

The opinion is then expressed that Britain and her allies do not possess sufficient anti-submarine craft to cope with this menace. Finally the German Admiralty, through the medium of a recent issue of its monthly review, has categorically announced its intention of sinking at sight every British merchantman encountered, on the grounds that all British merchantmen would be virtually ships of war. The same article examined British overseas communications, and con-

¹ Article in the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, January 9, 1939.

cluded that the most important from strategy would be the Mediterranean route to the East and Australasia, while the northern and southern routes across the Atlantic would be the most important vitally, in that they supplied Britain with so much of her foodstuffs and raw materials.

The occupation of Hainan Island by Japan has provided another potential object-lesson to Imperial strategists, or, rather, another potential threat to our communications. A Japanese air base on Hainan Island would menace Hong Kong, 300 miles away, Manila, 600 miles, and Singapore, 1,000 miles. A Japanese base on the island would threaten all the trade routes to the East from Singapore. Why didn't we occupy the island ourselves years ago? This is an object-lesson.

But dangers in the East are negligible beside those that threaten in the vulnerable focal waters of the Mediterranean and the oceanic fringes of Europe, not only from surface craft and submarines, but also from the air. During the Spanish Civil War hundreds of merchantmen were sunk by the bombs of aeroplanes. It may well be asked, if this small campaign could evoke so much destruction, what would be the result of another world war? The danger of air power to merchant shipping and sea-borne commerce cannot be underestimated. And a new method of shipping control by this weapon may intensify the difficulties of maintaining constant supplies of overseas materials. This method has been analysed by Air-Commodore Chamier.

He insists that "whereas the submarine fears to show itself and therefore attacks without warning, the aeroplane, like the surface cruiser, can without undue danger identify the ship, order it by wireless to proceed

to port, fire across its bows if it disobeys orders, and, like the surface warship, attack it with graduated force." The virtual disappearance of international codes and regulations of sea warfare improves the position of the raider still further: "It is true that if visit and search were in modern days conducted at sea, the aeroplane might become an ineffective weapon, but that procedure, in the face of the submarine menace and of the size and complexity of the modern vessel and its cargo, has long been abandoned."¹

Lastly, there is the menace to Imperial communications from within, or the decline in the tonnage of our merchant shipping. In 1916, out of an available total of 3,500 ships, more than 1,100 sea-going vessels were requisitioned for naval and military purposes. The total number of available ships to-day is approximately 2,300. At the end of 1938 there was an alarming decline of tonnage under construction compared with that of the previous year, amounting to 30 per cent. There has been, too, an alarming decrease in personnel, which is now 50,000 below pre-war strength.

Commander Stephen King-Hall has succinctly summarized the responsibilities of the Mercantile Marine in time of war:

"In the first place it has to continue to act as a carrier of raw materials from the Empire to the industrial base in England; secondly, it must carry men and munitions from all parts of the Empire to ports near the battle fronts; thirdly, the Royal Navy always expands in ships and men partly at the expense of the Mercantile Marine; and fourthly, the Mercantile Marine is expected to help to defend itself against every attack."²

¹ Article in the *Army, Navy and Air Force Gazette*, October 18, 1934.

² *Imperial Defence* (T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1927).

And it is beyond dispute that, however invincible may be our fighting forces, Britain must always run the risk of defeat by starvation, unless we have a really efficient Merchant Fleet, at least one-third as large as the present complement.

4

I have described briefly some of the menaces to our communications, but have not so far mentioned our capacity to combat those menaces. It does no harm to alarm—provided the cause is a good one, and the intention is not wilful.

The foundation of security for trade routes reside in the main fleet or fleets, but these do not provide complete cover, and active defence work must also be furnished by destruction of enemy bases, by blockade, by convoys and by cruising. Our programme of naval expansion should provide the wherewithal.

In addition to seven new battleships, the more important ships now being built or projected include 21 cruisers, 29 destroyers, 15 submarines and 5 aircraft carriers. This scale of naval expansion is quite unprecedented in our history. When the many smaller craft now being built are brought into account, it may be said that new ships will come along this year at the rate of more than one a week.

The First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Stanhope, underlined this effort in memorable words when he stated recently that the Navy is now equal to the task of "maintaining the vital sea routes against any probable combination of foes."¹ Indeed, one of the most

¹ See *The Times*, January 28, 1939.

notable features of the White Paper on Defence issued in February 1939, was that it contained "a swift and strong reply to the rapid growth of submarine forces in other navies."¹

This White Paper stated that the naval building programme for the coming financial year would include two flotillas of destroyers and twenty escort vessels of a new and fast type. But additional craft would include motor torpedo boats, which are potential anti-submarine craft, since they carry depth-charges, and there would also be many special motor anti-submarine craft under construction.

Then Mr. Geoffrey Shakespeare, the Parliamentary and Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, gave the most cheerful news of all when he introduced the Naval Estimates in March, and described new methods of countering the submarine and aerial menaces. Our methods of detecting, hunting and killing submarines were the most advanced in the world, he stated; and in proof of their efficiency Mr. Shakespeare told the House of Commons that he had himself taken part in a hunt for submerged submarines, and in nine cases out of ten the exact position of the boat was detected. He then called upon that doughty critic of the Government's rearmament scheme, Mr. Winston Churchill, to interrupt him if he exaggerated, for Mr. Churchill had made a similar test. "I agree with you," said Mr. Churchill.²

Still more heartening was Mr. Shakespeare's account of measures taken to combat attack from the air on shipping. He stated categorically that our modern ships produced a volume of defensive fire that would drive

¹ See the *Sunday Times*, February 19, 1939.

² See the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, March 17, 1939.

aircraft to a height at which the accuracy of their weapons would be seriously impaired. Some people imagined that a bomb had only to be dropped on a modern battleship and the ship would sink.

"Members will observe the size of this debating Chamber," Mr. Shakespeare continued. "Let them also imagine a volume in space two hundred times as great. That will be the volume of fire created by the anti-aircraft guns of a modern battleship into which an aeroplane could not enter without the probability of its destruction.

"The battleship designer nevertheless assumes that the brave pilots disregard the storm of shot and shell; that they continue to estimate the movement of the ship, their own movement, and the distance from their objective.

"Nor must it be forgotten that the point at which the aircraft releases its bomb is perhaps two miles away; that this point is known not only to the airman but to those in the ship; that from 10,000 feet the bomb will take half a minute to fall.

"The designer assumes that, in spite of all these difficulties, one or more bombs will hit the ship. Against these he must provide. Protection against shell fire is the designer's primary consideration.

"But protection against shell fire is also protection against aerial attack. If then the designer affords protection against plunging shell fire, as he can, he has afforded sufficient protection against the bomb. . . .

"I need only add two observations, that if every part of the British Empire of the same size as a capital ship were as elaborately fitted with means of repelling attack, the A.R.P. problem would be solved. Secondly, if anyone asks my honest opinion, whether I would rather go bombing a battleship in an aircraft, or to be bombed by an aircraft in a battleship, my deliberate choice would be to remain in the battleship every time."

This important and memorable statement has been quoted at length because it provides such an effective answer to the problems stated in previous sections of the chapter. Another part of Mr. Shakespeare's speech dealt with plans for protecting merchantmen, and was no less reassuring.

Until quite recently the Admiralty had not made up its mind whether to provide convoys for merchantmen or to divert shipping from the ordinary routes in the hope of foiling enemy raiders. It was considered that the adoption of a convoy system might be impracticable, owing to the serious delays in traffic that are inseparable from the method.

But this policy has since been "somewhat modified, thanks in part to the larger number of cruisers, destroyers and anti-submarine vessels which will soon be available."¹ Oil tankers and ships with valuable cargoes would probably be convoyed from the first, while "defence against enemy aircraft at sea would be provided by escort vessels of the new Bittern class, armed entirely with high-angle 4-inch guns, and by old cruisers rearmed with ten to twelve of these weapons."

Commenting on this development, Mr. Shakespeare stated definitely that any future submarine menace would not be so effective as in the last war. Even then the submarine only caused anxiety till the convoy system was introduced. But we were now ready to institute a convoy organization on any route. Arrangements, personnel and equipment were well advanced. More than two thousand anti-submarine guns were ready, and large numbers could be added in a short time.

About one thousand merchant ships had already been

¹ See article by Mr. Hector C. Bywater in the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, February 24, 1938.

"stiffened" to take defensive armament. Nine thousand officers of the merchant navy had already taken courses in convoy protection and gunnery. Armament and equipment for a large number of ships to be taken over for anti-submarine work were in stock.

5

Moreover, the German submarine menace may have been overestimated. One authority considers that the real war potentiality of the present and projected U-boat fleet is inconsiderable, because no fewer than thirty-three boats are of very small size (250 tons) and their *role* in war would probably be to defend Germany's Baltic coasts and trade routes. "A further twenty-four boats are of approximately 500 tons. While their effectiveness is greater than that of the Baltic submarines, it is still very circumscribed. German writers, at least, assign to them also purely defensive functions."¹

Meanwhile Germany has no overseas bases on which she can utterly rely, and all but the largest submarines are helpless in the wider oceans without nearby bases. But assuming that bases were taken by force in the Canaries, or established by negotiation in ex-German colonies, it is necessary to remember that they must be constantly restocked with fuel, provisions and armaments, and reinforced with men if they are to be of value in a long war. "How is Germany to do this without control of the sea surface and with enemy strongholds on both flanks?"

In summary, the British Empire is held together by sea and air communications, whose defence would be

¹ See article by Mr. Frank Clements in the *Fortnightly*, March 1939.

all-important in another war. To lose control of the Mediterranean route alone would be fatal to the continued existence of the Empire in its present form. If the lines of communication between Europe and America were severed, Britain would soon begin to starve; if the two Cape routes were also blocked, then Australia, New Zealand and South Africa would wither like blossoms on a broken bough. Canada would be drawn irresistibly into the orbit of the United States.

The chief menaces to these vital communications would be offered by small surface craft, submarines and aircraft. Opinions differ as to the likely extent of these menaces, and alignments of combatants in another war are still imponderable, but it is certain that the Royal Navy is thoroughly equipped to resist and destroy raiders within its sphere of action. This qualification is important, because it will have been noted that very little has been said about the possible extent of Japanese capabilities to interfere with shipping in the Pacific.

However, the Singapore Base provides us with a very useful weapon, and the Pacific Dominions are taking urgent steps to safeguard their own waters, while it is hardly conceivable that the United States would occupy the *role* of spectator if Japan attempted to interfere with the important communications of the Southern Ocean. It is significant that the news of Hitler's Czecho-Slovakian coup inspired the United States administration to disregard the veto of the isolationists and at once order improvements on the island of Guam, less than 1,500 miles from Tokyo.

Indeed, the conclusion of this important chapter is definite and reassuring. While sea power will undoubtedly be the master force in a world war, no modern developments have menaced British supremacy at sea.

Chapter II

Red on the Map

I

In this book, designed primarily to discuss the defensive potentialities of the overseas Empire, it has nevertheless been difficult to concentrate on the indigenous overseas defences alone. This is a very clear demonstration of the interdependence of the units of the Empire, for it is apparent that the defence of one is the duty of all. Thus the British Regular Army, in its main design, is intended primarily to perform the duties of an Imperial police force.

It has been rightly pointed out that just as there is no Empire like the British Empire, so our Army has duties different from those of any other army.¹ The conscript armies of continental countries serve almost entirely at home, as they have the single duty of protecting their land frontier from invasion. The British Army has to be ready to serve at any time, in any part of the world, for the Empire is distributed in all parts of the world. So special to itself are the duties of our Army, that nearly one-half of the Regular troops are nearly always abroad. We never see them. We hardly know what they do. It is certain that no other Army has responsibilities, in co-operation with the Navy and Air Force, for the defence and safety of 45 million people at home and 460 million overseas.

¹ See Pamphlet A.3, issued by the Army and Home and Empire Defence League, 2 Chesham Place, S.W.1.

Nevertheless, our Army, with its manifold duties, to perform, is very small in number by comparison with the military forces of the other Great Powers. It needs the best that it can have in guns, ammunition and equipment. Failure to provide these, and a constant supply of trained man-power, would irrevocably jeopardize the safety of the entire Empire. If to prepare for defence is only common-sense pacifism, then the work of the Regular Army, and more especially the overseas aspects of that work, deserves far more attention than it has hitherto received. Therefore I propose to examine that work in this special chapter.

I have referred to the original design of our present Regular Army as an Imperial police force. The basic structure of that design is the Cardwell System, often referred to, but rarely understood. The System was first introduced in the seventies of last century by the Secretary of State for War of that name, whose drastic reorganization of the Regular Army has never received due credit.

The two main features of the Cardwell System are the maintenance of a Regular reserve, and the creation of Linked Battalions. The Regular soldier serves for a number of years with the Colours, after which he returns to civilian life, but for a further period of years is a member of the Reserve, and under an obligation to rejoin his old regiment at once in an emergency. Thus the Army always has a considerable second-line strength, a Reserve that is not to be despised, more especially as the men are thoroughly trained and well-seasoned soldiers.

The Linked Battalion system works in this way.¹

¹ See *The Empire on Guard*, an excellent short survey by W. F. Wentworth-Sheilds (Faber, 1938).

There are normally two battalions to each regiment. For every battalion serving overseas a corresponding unit is maintained by the regiment at home. The home battalion trains recruits to take the place of men in the overseas unit whose time has expired. The overseas battalion is maintained at approximate war strength, but the corresponding home unit is rarely up to establishment.

The Cardwell System was substantially modified by the pre-war reforms carried through under the supervision of Lord Haldane, the chief effect of which was to create a real, though still inadequate British Army, where hitherto there had been little more than the skeleton of an organization. The main reforms were the establishment of the Expeditionary Force, the General Staff and the Territorial Force.

After the Great War, during which these improvements were fully justified, the Army was once more reduced to skeleton strength, and the Cardwell System was largely reinstated. Now it was again the principal duty of the Army to provide a police force for the overseas Empire, and in sharp succession widespread demands were made upon the meagre establishment. Most people will be amazed to learn that from 1918 to 1938 the Regular Army was thus engaged in no fewer than 33 "little wars." In order to make this point perfectly clear, and to demonstrate the diffused usefulness of our underrated standing army, I am going to give a short analysis of these engagements, as compiled recently by a valuable authority.¹ They were as follows:

1919. *The Rhine*.—A British garrison was retained

¹ See *Rising Strength*, organ of the Army and Home and Empire Defence League, June 1938.

on the Rhine up till 1929 in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

1919. *Third Afghan War, India.*—No less than 20,000 British troops were employed in the third Afghan War between May and August 1919.

1919. *Egypt.*—The British garrison in Egypt was employed on internal security duties, Martial Law being proclaimed.

1919. *Amritsar, India.*—Serious disturbance in Northern India, and especially in Amritsar necessitated the use of the Indian Army on a large scale for internal security purposes.

1920. *Arab revolt in Iraq.*—During 1920–21 a rebellion among the Arabs in Iraq involved the use of 80,000 troops in active operations.

1921. *India, Moolah Rebellion.*—One infantry brigade was employed during this rebellion.

1921. *Silesia.*—Approximately six battalions with other units were employed from June 1921 to July 1922 as keepers of the peace during disturbances in Silesia.

1921. *Egypt.*—The British garrison in Egypt was again employed on internal security, Martial Law being proclaimed.

1921. *Kurdistan.*—During 1921–22 a revolt of the tribes of Kurdistan necessitated the use of a punitive force of about half a brigade and R.A.F. forces.

1922. *Waziristan, India.*—Unrest in Waziristan which had been more or less continuous since 1919 led to operations on a large scale from January 1922 to March 1924, 340,000 troops being employed during that period.

1922. *Chanak.*—Approximately 19,000 British troops under General Harrington were employed as keepers

of the peace from October 1922 to August 1923, covering Constantinople.

1924. *Khartoum*.—Two British battalions were employed to suppress the mutiny of Sudanese troops following the murder of the Sirdar.

1926. *Shanghai*.—As a result of the civil war in China it became necessary to dispatch four brigades with ancillary troops, to defend the International Settlement from December 1926 to October 1928.

1927. *Nuer, Sudan*.—As a result of disturbances among the Nuer tribes the local forces had to be employed to restore the situation.

1929. *Palestine*.—Approximately three battalions and one squadron of armoured cars were employed as keepers of the peace during the disturbances in August.

1929. *Nuba Rebellion, Sudan*.—Disaffection among the tribes in S.E. Sudan necessitated operations on a small scale by the Sudan Defence Force and a detachment of R.A.F.

1929. *Bombay*.—Two battalions were employed on internal security during Communal disturbances, from May to August.

1930. *Sukkur, India*.—Two companies were employed on internal security duties during Communal disturbances.

1930. *Burmese Rebellion*.—One brigade of six battalions was dispatched from India in December 1930 to quell serious disturbances in Burma, and remained there until the end of 1931.

1930. *North-West Frontier, India*.—During the cold weather of 1930–31, unrest among the Afridis around Peshawar led to extensive operations involving the use of 33,000 troops.

1931. *Benares, India*.—One company employed on internal security duties during Communal disturbances.

1931. *Cawnpore, India*.—Two half-battalions and local forces were employed on internal security duties during serious Communal riots.

1931. *Dera Ismail Khan, India*.—Three infantry companies were employed on internal security duties during Communal disturbances.

1931. *Kashmir, India*.—One cavalry regiment and two infantry battalions were employed on internal security during serious internal disturbances in Kashmir State.

1931. *Cyprus*.—Three companies of infantry and one section of armoured cars were detailed as keepers of the peace during local disturbances.

1932. *Shanghai*.—Four battalions were engaged in the defence of the International Settlement during fighting near Shanghai in the course of the Sino-Japanese dispute. One battalion and one battery were brought from Hong Kong, and one battalion was retained at Shanghai beyond its normal tour.

1932. *Iraq*.—Owing to the mutiny of the Assyrian Levies, one battalion was sent by air from Egypt to Iraq in June 1932.

1933. *North-West Frontier of India*.—During trouble among the Mohmands 8,000 troops were employed.

1933. *Palestine*.—During 1933 serious riots in Jaffa involved the use of the forces in Palestine for internal security purposes.

1934. *The Saar*.—Two battalions and eight armoured cars were sent from England to form part of the International Force to act as keepers of the peace during the Plebiscite from December 1934 to March 1935.

1935. *North-West Frontier of India*.—Owing to trouble

among the Mohmands 14,000 troops were employed on field operations.

1935. *Italo-Abyssinia dispute*.—This necessitated the following reinforcements being sent to protect British interests in the Near East: One company to Addis Ababa from India; one battalion less one company to Aden from India; three battalions and A.A. units to Malta from the U.K.; two infantry brigades and a proportion of other troops to Egypt from the U.K. These were dispatched during the autumn of 1935 and did not return until the end of 1936.

1936. *Palestine*.—A total of six infantry brigades, together with ancillary units were dispatched during the summer as the result of riots in Palestine. All but six battalions were withdrawn by the end of the year.

1936. *Waziristan, India*.—During 1936 and 1937 unrest in Waziristan involved the employment of 37,000 troops on active operations and resulted in considerable casualties.

1937. *Trinidad*.—Normally the West Indies are considered to be the one Colonial garrison where trouble need not be expected, but in November 1937, in anticipation of renewed riots in Trinidad it was necessary to send one infantry company from Bermuda to Trinidad.

1937. *Shanghai*.—As a result of the Sino-Japanese conflict it was necessary to send two battalions to Shanghai from Hong Kong in August, and to strengthen the garrison in the Far East by the dispatch of one Indian battalion to Hong Kong from India.

Since then more troops have been sent to the Near and Far East, but the above analysis should serve to give a slight idea of the duties and responsibilities of the Regular Army overseas in times of so-called peace.

Until recently, then, the functions of the Regular Army were clearly defined as follows: 1. The provision of "peace" garrisons overseas. 2. The reinforcement of those garrisons in time of war. 3. The defence of the United Kingdom. 4. Intervention abroad on behalf of our Allies or interests. The emphasis was all on overseas defence; and this naturally proceeded from the realization that for centuries all the wars in which we had been engaged had been fought out elsewhere than in Great Britain—in Europe, the Crimea, South Africa and India. Even the Great War did not shatter this dangerous insularity of outlook. The civilian population of Great Britain suffered no such horrors as the peoples of Belgium, France and the other victims of invasion.

But the advent of aerial warfare altered our situation so completely that it could not be ignored by our strategists, and at last a radical change was made in the disposition of the Regular Army. It can be said that in a year the above tabulated functions of the Army were completely reversed by official policy. When he presented the Army Estimates in March 1938,¹ the Secretary of State for War (Mr. Hore-Belisha) made the definite statement that under the changed conditions the first function of the Army was now Home Defence. Secondly the Army had to perform garrison duties overseas; and thirdly it had to maintain a strategic reserve at home.

Specific provision was no longer made for reinforcing overseas garrisons in time of war, and Mr. Hore-Belisha explained that this duty would now be under-

¹ See *The Times*, March 11, 1938.

taken, as far as possible, by the overseas garrisons themselves, which "should be maintained in peace at a strength adequate for their responsibilities of defence at the outbreak of war." The raising of local forces would be encouraged and, "wherever it be possible to employ further local personnel for anti-aircraft and coast defence duties in particular, whether in combination with British personnel or otherwise, the practice will be followed."

This trend has been carried still further forward by the energetic Mr. Hore-Belisha during the last year, and during his speech on the 1939 Army estimates, he made a final statement of the new principle of overseas defence.¹

This, he said, was based on a recommendation made by the Carnarvon Commission as long ago as 1882, of which the significant paragraph was as follows: "The stations far distant from the United Kingdom and in close proximity to the stations of foreign Powers are liable to sudden attack and cannot be reinforced without long delay; their garrisons, therefore, must be kept up to war strength."

Wherever possible, Mr. Hore-Belisha continued, native personnel was being enlisted, and to this extent an added commitment was discharged without entrenching upon the Regular Army. It had been arranged to add 1,100 Maltese gunners to the existing establishment, and 900 recruits had presented themselves immediately. A British officer was visiting Cyprus to ascertain to what extent the desire of the people there to play their part in Imperial defence could be met.

In Singapore, Malay and India establishments were

¹ See *The Times*, March 9, 1939.

being increased by about 1,000, and in Hong Kong the Chinese and Indian personnel had been increased. Actually the establishment of Indian and local troops in defended ports outside India was in 1937 3,766, and this figure was being raised for the coming year to 9,500.

The Secretary of War on this occasion also raised the important point "whether they took fully into account the extent to which our sea power itself depended upon the Army." Where a garrison fell below the strength to defend itself successfully the Navy lost its strategic freedom of action owing to the necessity of relieving the fortress. Bases away from the United Kingdom still had to provide safe harbours for the Fleet, but, like the Navy also, they were encompassed with new perils. Therefore the Government had reconsidered their overseas garrison policy, which "was in essence a revival of the principle of the Carnarvon report."

4

It is my firm belief that our Government has been very wise to adopt this new policy, for the strengthening of overseas bases, under modern conditions, means the development of a system of Imperial defence that may eventually overcome the chief weakness of the Empire, namely its territorial diffusion. The military representative of a European Power once remarked to me that he did not envy his colleagues of the British Empire, because they had "territories in all parts of the world to defend, while his country could concentrate all its forces on a few frontiers."

Let us briefly examine this matter of overseas bases.

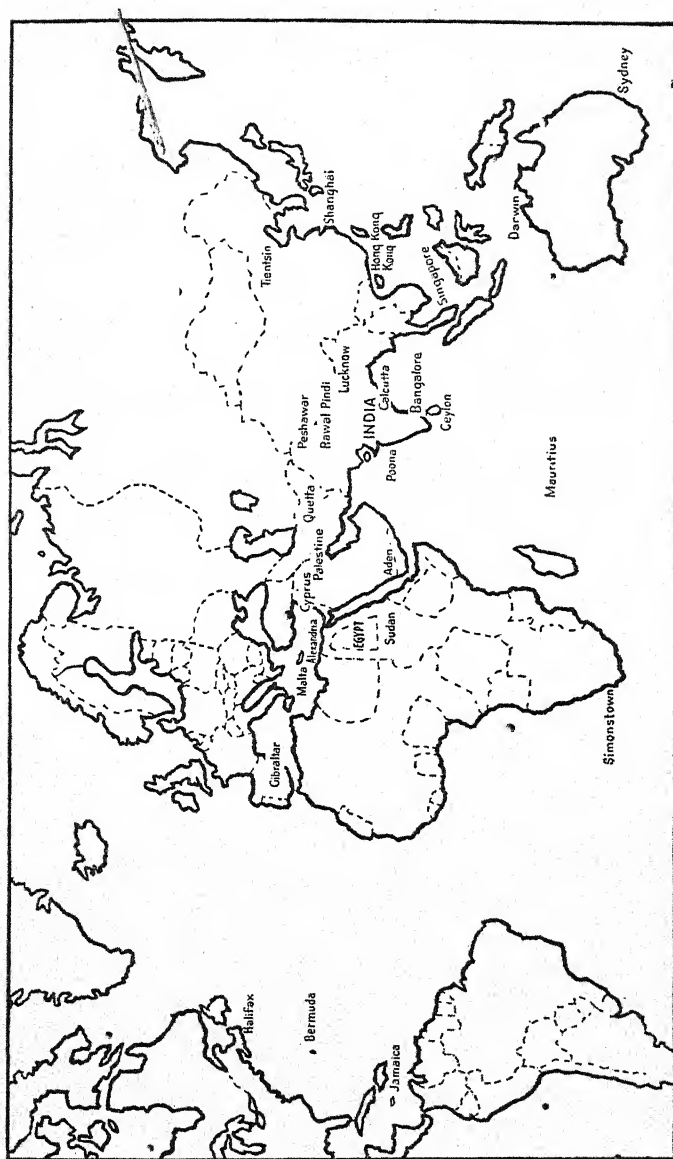
A base may be defined as a strong citadel equipped with men and weapons to protect the surrounding neighbourhood, and to provide a navy or army with shelter and supplies. Because the British Empire is essentially a maritime Power, her bases are mostly prepared for the use of warships and aeroplanes. Such a citadel of Empire is the mighty Singapore Base, just completed at a cost of over £20,000,000.

Singapore is situated at the tip of the Malay Peninsula, and therefore commands the direct route between the Far East and the Indian Ocean. The only other route passes through a dangerous labyrinth of islands, where a fleet could be easily ambushed. Indeed, a British fleet based on Singapore could dominate the Indian Ocean, the Dutch East Indies, New Guinea, Borneo, Australia and New Zealand, besides affording protection to Hong Kong.

But Singapore is far distant from the Mother Country, and must be capable of withstanding any kind of attack for an indefinite period.¹ Therefore it has been made immensely strong, with fortifications, oil tanks, and great stores of foodstuffs, materials and ammunition. The harbour could accommodate the largest battle fleet ever likely to be needed in those parts. Two of the mightiest warships afloat could be repaired at once in the giant graving dock.

"What the new base has done," states Mr. Bywater, "is to project British naval power 6,000 miles to the eastward of Malta, opening to our battleships a large and vital area of the Pacific Ocean hitherto closed to them by the lack of docking accommodation. Every British community in the Pacific and the Indian Ocean

¹ The authoritative writings of Mr. Hector C. Bywater have assisted me greatly in my study of Singapore.



CITADELS OF EMPIRE

[By courtesy of "Citizen Service"]

breathes more freely now that the Singapore Base is in full working order."

But Britain has not been content to place all her eggs in one basic basket. She has now decided to establish a strong garrison with medium and big calibre guns and the most modern anti-aircraft units on Penang Island, which commands the northern end of the Straits of Malacca. Singapore is situated at the southern end, so Britain will literally stand astride the route to the Orient. It is believed that Penang will eventually become one of the strongest of the defended ports in the Far East.

Half-way between Singapore and Suez lies Trincomalee, a remarkable harbour of Ceylon, described by the Admiralty as one of the most perfect in the world. A sum of £1,500,000 has been allotted for the building of a great new naval and air base at Trincomalee. During a routine exercise recently, Royal Air Force machines flew from Singapore to Penang, and thence across 1,400 miles of open sea to Trincomalee. It can be understood that the three bases, Singapore, Penang and Trincomalee will provide Britain with a self-contained defensive triangle, completely dominating the North Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

This is part of the new strategic policy of the British Empire—to establish strong naval, military and air bases in carefully chosen localities. Accordingly it has been possible to weave what may be described as a network of Imperial defences across the entire world. The important North Atlantic seaway is thus guarded by a first-class naval base at Halifax, N.S., in the north, and a similar station at Bermuda in the south.

Simonstown naval base protects the secondary route to the East via the Cape of Good Hope, while South

Africa is transforming Robben Island, off Cape Town, into a veritable Heligoland of the south. Similarly Canada has greatly strengthened the naval station at Esquimalt, near Vancouver on the Pacific seaboard, while Australia is building a naval and air base at Darwin on her northern tropical coast. This base, by co-operating with Singapore, will still further strengthen the British position in that area.

And nothing has been said about the Mediterranean bases, or various new projects of a secret nature that are at present under the urgent consideration of the Admiralty.

If these bases did not exist, or fell into the hands of an enemy, the Navy would become practically useless for overseas defence, as it could not refuel or refit. Hence the importance of the protection of these centres, which falls mainly on the Regular Army, now to be supported by locally raised garrisons.

5

To recapitulate the points raised in this chapter it is first necessary to repeat the statement made above, namely that the defence of the overseas Empire is partly an important responsibility of the Regular British Army. Nearly one-half of this Force is permanently garrisoned overseas, not as a deliberately offensive weapon, but as a stabilizing influence in areas peculiarly liable to internal insurrection. This is not to say that the Regular Army overseas is an instrument for oppressing subject peoples. The analysis given of the 33 "little wars" of the last twenty years shows that more often than not the British troops are primarily

required to quell communal disturbances, that is to say disorders caused by warring factions among the native populations. It is not hypocritical to declare that Britain has in many cases rendered largely unrequited service to humanity by keeping the peace among anarchical irreconcilables. It is a plain statement of the truth, which needs to be made with vigour at a time when Colonel Blimp is a favourite butt of the self-styled intellectuals.

One is tempted to reflect after considering that astounding record of "little wars" that if the Regular Army is thus engaged in times of so-called "peace," then its duties in times of general war would be tremendously complicated. Thus the brief account of the Cardwell System, and the evolution of military ideas in recent years, has considerable significance. Until the growth of air-power it was taken for granted that the first duty of the Regular Army lay overseas, but the direct menace to the Mother Country herself has completely reversed that consideration.

The policy of the Imperial General Staff to-day is to afford Home protection first, and to endeavour to maintain overseas garrisons at permanent war strength, partly by the raising of local levies. The development of bases in all parts of the Empire assists this policy, and it might be added that the moves to manufacture warplanes in the Dominions, as detailed in a later chapter, greatly augments the diffused strength of the Empire.

Finally I would like once again to mention the chief duties of the Army overseas.

In the first place, the Army guards naval bases, dockyards and oil depots, such as Gibraltar, Malta and Singapore, where the Navy, in safety, refits,

refuels and takes in supplies, while protecting thousands of miles of sea routes along which our food and raw materials are carried. If these bases were destroyed the Navy would be unable to keep the seas.

Secondly, the Army acts as an Imperial police force to maintain internal security in the Colonies and India, while it garrisons strategic points overseas. These must be held if the Empire is to continue as a political unit. I refer particularly to the Suez Canal Zone, the narrow way of the short sea route to India and the Far East; Aden; the West Indies; Bermuda; Palestine and Hong Kong.

Finally, the Army shares with the Navy and the Air Force the duty of honouring obligations under international treaties, such as those with Egypt and Iraq, and in respect of Palestine under the Mandate.

These are merely the sketchy outlines of the *overseas* duties of the Regular Army. We all realize the responsibilities nearer home, more especially since the new military guarantees to certain European Powers. The great Territorial Army backs up the Regulars in these nearer and newer responsibilities. And similarly, I suppose, it can be said that the armies of the Dominions and Colonies indirectly support the Regular troops in their overseas functions.

But nothing can diminish the importance of Britain's red line across the seven seas and the wide world, and it is heartening to know, after a careful survey of the present position, that the line is preparing to stand firm.

The Strategy of Empire

I

It has been stated that the British Dominions can no longer be regarded merely as "reserve sources of strength for a centralized scheme of Imperial defence, controlled and maintained by Great Britain."¹ But the niceties of status and written constitution play a small part in the fundamental relations of nations, and a realist must necessarily probe deeper than the ceremonial surface. Certain questions he must ask, whether he offends susceptibilities, whether his viewpoint is that of London or Cape Town, Wellington or Canberra.

For instance, do the necessary plans exist to secure, in event of war, unity of command of all the Imperial defence forces, and mobilization of all the resources available, political, military, financial and industrial?

No topic is so difficult to investigate or so complex to discuss as the strategic problem of a modern nation. Most of the relevant facts are necessarily secret, and much information is obsolete before it is published. In the case of the British Empire there is an unequalled multiplicity of problems; and, indeed, the basic question does mainly concern the co-ordination of, or collaboration between, units as envisaged in the question at the end of the last paragraph. The basic strategy of a great Continental Power is to protect frontiers and plan extension of those frontiers by careful aggression.

¹ *The Round Table*, June 1938.

Left to herself, Great Britain would only have to think of her narrow seas and guardian shores. But the Empire stretches across the seven seas, and from the viewpoint of the old land strategists is perhaps the most vulnerable collection of States that the world has ever known. Complete understanding and co-operation between all authorities in all Empire countries can alone guarantee the efficiency of such a colossal undertaking as the defence of the whole Empire.

Fundamentally the safety of the Empire depends upon the Royal Navy, the Army and the Royal Air Force. British troops and guns must be ready to protect vital colonial and other overseas territories such as Hong Kong, India, Palestine and the Sudan, while units of the Air Force must be available to supplement military defences in areas such as the Straits Settlements, the North-West Frontier of India, the Near East and colonial Africa. But the principal contribution of the Mother Country to overseas Imperial defence is the safeguarding of sea communications, a task for the Navy alone, with some small collaboration from the Air Force. Britain must furnish the main fleet, and the Dominions participate in a general scheme by operating small squadrons in their own waters and providing the defences of their bases and ports.

As a distinguished overseas politician has pointed out, if the Empire's naval strength were to be reduced to a point where its security was imperilled, every part of the Empire would be confronted with the enlargement of its land and air forces for home defence to a far greater degree than when they were related to an adequate Navy, while still being under the necessity of providing for the safety of sea-borne trade. To create such a position would inevitably involve increased Empire

expenditure on armaments, and would result in less absolute security. The authority continues:

"An overseas expedition aimed at any part of the Empire may be said to be a highly improbable undertaking so long as adequately defended bases exist, and the fleets of the Empire are maintained at such a strength as to enable a force to be dispatched to the threatened region should the need arise. For invasion, an aggressor requires command of the sea, not only to land his expedition but for the maintenance of its lines of communication for supplies and reinforcements."¹

The expansion of the Royal Navy to meet this responsibility has been discussed in previous chapters, and the steps taken by the Dominions to fulfil their naval and coastal defence commitments have also been outlined. Then attention has been paid to the establishment and strengthening of those overseas naval, air and military bases, such as Singapore and Trincomalee, which would form such important links in the Imperial strategic chain.

It remains, therefore, to discuss briefly the share of the individual Dominions in the scheme of Imperial strategy that I envisage.

2

It has been rightly stated that Canada is less likely to precipitate a war than any other Dominion. As has been pointed out in the chapter on Canada, military experts there held until recently that in the event of a war involving Great Britain or the United States, Canada's

¹ Official statement by Sir Archdale Parkhill, former Australian Minister for Defence, October 19, 1937.

part would be limited to co-operation in the maintenance of communications with American or British bases, supply of war materials, and defence of her own coasts against sporadic naval and air attack. For instance, one authority has advanced that Canada's internal communications, particularly her airways, already constitute a very important contribution to Imperial defence.

That is so, and even if Canada adopted only the *role* of sleeping partner in any future Imperial alliance for defensive purposes, such an indirect contribution would be very valuable. The establishment of a Canadian military aircraft industry to assist British munitionment has been dealt with at length elsewhere. But Canada has other industrial resources, and it might be worth noting that when Sir Edward Ellington visited the Dominion with the Air Mission he paid a special visit to the Turner Valley Oil Fields, afterwards expressing the view that these might become immensely valuable to the Empire should imports from the United States and the Far East be curtailed.

Attention is thus focused once more upon this remarkable area near the foothills of the Rockies, where experts have proclaimed the existence of an almost incalculable reserve of fuel oil. This field, according to the Dominion Department of Mines and Resources, has a potential production of 26,800 barrels a day, though only about 40 per cent is being produced owing to lack of storage and handling facilities. But the development of the area is going steadily forward, although under careful and rigid control. Last year nearly three million barrels were produced, bringing the total Alberta oil production since 1914 up to something like fourteen million barrels.

The principles of co-operation with the Imperial machine that might apply to the Canadian forces in event of this Dominion's joining in a British war, have been laid down as follows by an informed authority:¹

(1) That Canadian personnel will be reserved for Canadian units and services, but that individuals may be loaned to the forces of other portions of the Commonwealth if required. (2) That Canadian forces will be, as far as practicable, administratively self-contained with a direct channel of responsibility to the Canadian Government. (3) That tactically the Canadian Commander will probably be under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, but he will not be free from responsibility to the Canadian Government for the safety of his command. (4) That initially and in order to facilitate transportation and deployment the British war establishments will be accepted without change, but that Canada will hold herself free to modify these establishments in the light of experience and of her own special conditions.

The policy of the Union of South Africa is to keep its military organization in harmony with that adopted by Great Britain, but it must be added that, under the law of the Union, no citizen can be compelled to render personal war service outside South Africa. Discussion as to potential co-operation is regularly carried on between Union officials and the War Office and Air Ministry, but only on the distinct understanding that nothing will be agreed upon that might prejudice the Union's decision as to its participation in any particular eventuality.

Undoubtedly the most useful way South Africa can

¹ G. E. H. Palmer, in his *Consultation and Co-operation in the British Commonwealth* (Oxford University Press, 1934).

serve the interests of the Empire is to devote all available financial resources to the development of her defence forces. At the same time, reliance upon the Royal Navy to protect coastlines and trade routes is a fundamental of South African defence policy, and it must be remembered that Simonstown Harbour was specifically recognized as a British naval base in the agreement made between General Smuts and Mr. Winston Churchill in 1922, an agreement that has been categorically confirmed by the present Union Government. Undoubtedly the South African Defence Department is making every effort to render its co-operation with the Admiralty as effective as possible.

Co-operation of India and Eire in the scheme of Imperial defence principally involves self-protection, and provision of reserve man and industrial power. Eire has taken over her own defences, and could perhaps be relied upon to resist attack on her important ports and industrial centres fairly successfully. Her ability to supplement the food supplies of the United Kingdom would be invaluable in an emergency. Similarly India is strengthening her own defences, and, while placing her industrial resources at the disposal of the Empire, has also an immense reserve of man-power.

Australia and New Zealand, for a good reason that will presently emerge, have been left to the last. Primarily the responsibility of Australia is to defend her own coastline and local trade routes; co-operate with the British forces at Singapore; have in readiness an expeditionary force which could, if necessary, proceed overseas; and to provide supplies for her own forces and possibly for the Empire at large. The last item is perhaps the most significant.

At the Imperial Conference of 1937 it was agreed that

there should be developed as soon as possible in different parts of the Empire resources for the manufacture of munitions, as well as for the supply of raw materials, with the following objects: (1) A reduction in the existing dependence of all parts of the Commonwealth on the munitions produced in the United Kingdom. (2) The avoidance as far as possible of over-concentration of resources for manufacture and supply in any area especially liable to attack. (3) The possibility of a development and extension of such resources in time of emergency.

Australia showed her usual promptitude and acumen in that she was the first Dominion actively to adopt these recommendations. The current rearmament programme of the Dominion provides for many new factories which, while increasing local self-sufficiency, will relieve Britain from meeting Australian demands for munitions, and also contribute to the needs of the Empire in an emergency.

The early completion of these factories will enable Australia to participate in orders for peace-time supplies required by Britain and possibly the other Dominions. This expansion will be advantageous to Australian workers, not only at the factories concerned, but also in the industries supplying raw materials.

It is now the definite policy of the Australian Government to develop in peace "resources for the manufacture of munitions as well as the supply of raw material, in order to make the Commonwealth as self-supporting as possible in armaments and munitions of war. The functions of the Principal Supply Officers' Committee are to prepare a statement of the requirements of the Services in war-time, to examine these in relation to the stocks and productive resources of the country, and

to prepare plans for mobilizing the resources of industry in an emergency."¹

The New Zealand Government has recently re-organized the local defence forces to secure full co-ordination with the Imperial forces, and has expressed willingness to co-operate in any further planning. But New Zealand's most important contribution has been her voluntary summoning of a Pacific Conference between the United Kingdom, Australia and herself to discuss special strategic problems and possible co-operation in that area.

3

It is obvious that Australia and New Zealand have common defence problems, and the fact that hitherto they have not collaborated in joint preparations for meeting any eventuality has worried Dominions publicists for many years. As a New Zealand paper pointed out: "Although it is possible to feel reasonably certain that both the Australian and New Zealand Governments are co-operating effectively with the British Government in defence policy, it is more difficult to feel assured that there will be the same co-operation between the Australian and New Zealand Governments."¹

All credit must be paid to Mr. M. J. Savage, the Labour Prime Minister of New Zealand, for his long-range initiative in calling the Conference. As the internationally minded leader of a very small country (in population and financial resources) which would be

¹ Speech by the former Prime Minister (Mr. J. A. Lyons) in the House of Representatives, August 24, 1937.

² *The Christchurch Press*, New Zealand, December 20, 1937.

unable to defend itself single-handed against a heavily armed aggressor, he appreciates the value of co-operation. His avowed object in making the suggestion was to find a basis of permanent co-operation between the component parts of the British Empire in the Pacific.

Undoubtedly there has been a growing feeling that in the event of war the Pacific Dominions would be unlikely to send large contingents to Europe, but would lend assistance chiefly by defending British interests in their own part of the world. The task of Australia and New Zealand in another war would primarily be defence in the Pacific, and closer co-ordination and more definite plans are therefore necessary.

It has been pointed out in previous sections of this book that Australasian strategists now consider that attacks on these Dominions would be more in the nature of raids than large-scale invasions, owing to the distance an invader would have to operate from any base, and also to the potential effectiveness of Singapore, and the potential protection to be afforded by United States naval power in the Pacific. But it is also realized that Japan has definitely stated her intention of expanding towards the Nan-yo (South Seas). In his book *Japan Must Fight Britain* (1936), Captain Ishimaru openly offered a plan for naval and air attack upon Australia. A very balanced New Zealand publicist, Mr. Frank Milner, has stated his young country's apprehension of this policy: "We are now realizing that the Far East becomes to us the Near North. Science annihilates space daily, and our complacency is being rudely disturbed as we learn more and more of the policy and the activities of the naval expansionist school of Japan. . . . What counts in raiding excursions is not the mileage

between Yokohama and Sydney but that between Palau and New Guinea."¹

Therefore Australia and New Zealand have had to consider the possibility of protecting the numerous British island groups of the South Seas, which would possibly fall an easy prey to an attacker, and which have assumed a new importance recently in view of air developments.

The Conference was held at Wellington, New Zealand, in April, and was attended by New Zealand and Australian political and technical representatives, Sir Harry Battenbee, the High Commissioner in New Zealand, and Sir Harry Luke, the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, represented the United Kingdom. The Royal Air Force Mission to Australia and New Zealand under Sir Hardman Lever was available. The Governor-General of New Zealand, Viscount Galway, opened the proceedings, and Mr. Savage was elected Chairman.

Actually the proceedings were held in private, and special precautions were taken to ensure secrecy, but the broad outlines of discussion are generally accepted to have been as follows. It would be desirable to establish a Pacific Defence Council consisting of nine members—three from Great Britain, three from Australia and three from New Zealand. Then each of these countries would nominate a senior officer from the three Services.²

The object of this Council would be—or perhaps we could say will be—to act as a co-ordinating body, so that duplication of effort could be avoided, and maxi-

¹ Article in *The Christchurch Press*, New Zealand, January 16, 1939.

² I am indebted to the Sydney Correspondent of *the Sunday Times*, March 26, 1939, for this valuable information.

mum security could be afforded to all parts of the Empire within its zone of activity, which would be extended from "Singapore to Fiji in the north and Albany to Invercargill in the south." The forces at its command would include "the New Zealand Naval Squadron, the China Fleet and the Royal Australian Navy; the Far Eastern Command of the Royal Air Force, the Royal Australian Air Force, and the Royal New Zealand Air Force; as well as the Dominions armies and the British troops stationed in the Eastern and Pacific colonies."

It is believed that the Conference deliberated on the fundamental assumption that Britain would need all her available strength on the home front and in the Mediterranean. Therefore ways and means were discussed of making the available forces independent of British reinforcements. "It is expected here that the Imperial Government will use the Conference to announce its intention of further assisting Pacific defence by establishing a Pacific Command of the Royal Air Force at Fiji, and that this command will come within the range of the proposed Defence Board." Moreover, the new co-ordinating body would probably consider also the control of essentials in time of war, so that the Pacific nations would be made self-supporting in food-stuffs, and at the same time would have surpluses available for shipment to Great Britain. In fact, it is believed that the Conference made an exhaustive examination of the economic and domestic problems of each country in time of crisis.

The thorough and searching character of all these investigations, although they cannot be made public in detail, must greatly enhance what may be termed the "defence bargaining power" of Australia and New

Zealand. Indeed, they put the defence measures of these Dominions on such a definite basis that it would become appreciably easier to approach the United States with suggestions for an understanding aimed at the preservation of peace in the Pacific.

Similarly the outcome of the Conference may be a closer liaison between the Australasian Dominions and Canada in defensive preparations. Canada was not concerned with the actual discussions because it was felt that the defence of the Southern Pacific involved Australia and New Zealand essentially, but the Canadian Government is now devoting much attention to the defence of the coast of British Columbia,¹ to which a major share of the defence estimates has been allotted. It might seem, therefore, that it would be of interest to the Canadian Government that these plans should be co-ordinated with the British defence plans in the Southern Pacific. Under the old procedure the southern Dominions would not be consulted about the defence of the Canadian coast, and undoubtedly a broad discussion of sea, land and air defence co-ordination in the Pacific would be a matter for an Imperial Conference; but the action of Mr. Savage in calling the Pacific Conference might usefully be taken as initiating a new procedure.

It is certain that this Conference performed a very useful service in stimulating public opinion on Pacific defence. The *Sydney Sun* of March 9, 1939, made a special point of the fact that Japan's current naval programme far exceeded her needs for defensive operations in home waters and indicated expansion towards the south. The hope was expressed that the Pacific

¹ The Ottawa Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, March 1, 1939.

Conference, together with the report of the Air Mission from Great Britain, would result in "a great effort to broaden the general understanding of the need for preparedness."

In the same way Sir Walter Carpenter, a close Australian observer of Pacific affairs, declared that New Zealand and Australia were only "playing with defence."¹ Their unpreparedness, he considered, positively invited attacks. He declared that a large Japanese force could quickly descend on Australia and New Zealand, and therefore "a South Pacific fleet strong enough to deter any would-be attacker should be established at once." New Zealand, he stated, should provide £50,000,000 towards an adequate fleet and air force, even if it meant raising a loan. "Intense co-operation with Great Britain was the only guarantee of safety for her and Australia."

Commenting on the Conference, a leader writer of the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* stated on March 13, 1939, that the meeting was "no more than might have been expected, but is none the less gratifying." The main burden in any case would fall on the Royal Navy; but its task would be made much less onerous "by the Dominions' preparedness to meet an emergency, and by a concerted strategy with the home country." It was worth noting that the experts' discussions would not commit the Governments concerned. This, however, would not diminish "the value of consultations dictated by a common interest and undertaken with reciprocal good will."

I have quoted these passages to indicate the general attitude that still exists towards Imperial co-operation, even among Imperialists. Thus far are we from the

¹ See *The British Australian and New Zealander*, January 12, 1939.

practical scheme for complete Empire military co-ordination that I have continually insisted upon in this book. But I agree with the commentators that even the tentative Beginning is a welcome, if not an epoch-making departure that may possibly lead to greater things.

4

The vital problem of the British Empire has been defined as the difficulty of converting the relative insecurity of each part of the Empire into the relative strength of the whole. No common defence organization for the protection of the Empire is in existence at the present day, and the member States as a whole are not even bound to each other in formal military alliance. Certain indefinite machinery does exist for co-operation in defence, however, and it may be as well to give an outline of its history and functions.

Policy is discussed and formulated at periodical Imperial Conferences. Details of policy are worked out by the Overseas Defence Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, a body that was brought into existence by Lord (then Mr. A. J.) Balfour in 1904. During the Great War it formed the nucleus of the War Council, later the War Cabinet, and finally it became the Imperial War Cabinet. But after the War it returned to its former bureaucratic and advisory status, and although to-day it may make recommendations to the various Governments of the Empire for modifications of the principles adopted at the Conference, such recommendations are nothing more than that.

An authoritative account of the machinery of the

Committee was unfolded by its Secretary, Major-General H. L. Ismay, in the course of a lecture at the Royal United Service Institution recently. We have Major-General A. C. Temperley's word for it that this was, in fact, "the first time that the veil has been lifted which has covered this all-important organ of State during the thirty-four years of its life."¹ As one of the favoured persons who were invited to attend this lecture, General Temperley states that a brief glimpse was given of "the Higher Direction of a future war, the crux being to devise a system which will combine rapid and effective executive action with the maintenance of Cabinet control."

Two new factors had arisen since 1918: first, the air, and, second, the fact that the whole resources of the nation would in future be mobilized. As a result of evolution a Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee had been created, and then in 1936 a Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence. According to General Temperley, General Ismay then proceeded to defend and justify the system of working by committees and sub-committees as the means of assembling the team most appropriate in each case. He stated that five main groups of sub-committees had been created as follows: (1) The strategy and planning; (2) the organization for war, including civil defence, home defence, censorship and war emergency legislation; (3) the man-power group; (4) the supply group, including munitions, food and oil; and (5) the miscellaneous group, including research and experiment. During the previous twelve months there had been no fewer than 409 meetings of the C.I.D. itself and its sub-committees, attended by 876 persons.

¹ *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, January 12, 1939.

In his final remarks, General Ismay claimed that the C.I.D. was a flexible and progressive organism, which could be adapted to meet any future demand. General Temperley concludes: "The story, indeed, is one of a remarkable development of machinery which is characteristic of the British genius for compromise and adaptability, for evolution rather than revolution. . . . It is probably the extreme limit to which we can go without disturbing existing constitutional checks and traditions. But there are some who think that yet more drastic steps must be taken in unity of command and control if we are not to be outdistanced in swiftness of execution by the totalitarian States."

The trained hand of Mr. H. V. Hodson has listed three kinds of practical collaboration in Imperial defence measures. There are, he says, general understandings for use of the Dominions defence forces in event of war, understandings that refer particularly to the naval forces of Australia and New Zealand; then there are measures of technical co-ordination and unification, covering the entire Empire with the exception of Eire. Training methods and types of arms and equipment are kept as uniform as possible, while regular exchanges of personnel are encouraged. Overseas staff officers regularly attend the various United Kingdom staff colleges, and the Imperial Defence College, while Dominions officers are periodically attached to British units. Finally, Mr. Hodson refers to specific arrangements for grant or exchange of definite facilities or services, such as the Simonstown Naval and the New Zealand Air Agreements.¹

Nevertheless, at least one distinguished military authority has pointed out that while the establishments

¹ *The Empire and the World* (Oxford University Press, 1937).

and general training, equipment and weapons of the Commonwealth forces are similar to those of Great Britain, the higher administration and organization are "somewhat dissimilar,"¹ and it cannot be denied that much yet remains to be done in practical co-ordination. I must quote Major-General J. F. C. Fuller in his valuable book *Empire Unity and Defence*.¹

"The Empire is without a brain. In 1914 the Dominions blindly followed the Mother Country because sentiment and fear, both consciously and unconsciously, drove them to do so. To-day each has grown a political head, yet there is no common brain; in fact, the Empire has become a hydra—a monster of potential discord."

Victory in 1918, General Fuller continues, was not followed by consolidation but by dissolution; and most observers will have to agree with this in so far as the mechanics of Imperial strategical consultation are concerned. But, as I have endeavoured to show, co-operation in matters of detail is assured; regional collaboration is developing; and the Empire at large is not unready to fight as one man.

¹ A. G. Boycott, in *The Elements of Imperial Defence*.

² Published by Arrowsmith, 1934.

Chapter 13

When Britain Is at War

I

During the Czecho-Slovakian crisis it was my task to observe the reactions of the British Dominions and Colonies to the unfortunate happenings in Europe. Would the Dominions approve of the British Government's policy? Could the Mother Country rely upon their support in the final event of war?

These were important questions. Since the Great War, in which they had fought so bravely, the Dominions had grown to manhood. They could now decide for themselves whether to participate in a European conflict. Perhaps the future of the British Empire might depend upon their attitude in this crisis.

But it was foolish to have feared. The Empire did choose to support Great Britain; and now that sufficient time has elapsed for a complete survey to be made, I have before me overwhelming documentary evidence, mainly speeches of overseas politicians and articles from Dominions' newspapers, to prove that King George's five hundred million subjects would have willingly banded themselves together if the safety of the Empire had been at stake. Thus a spokesman of the Canadian Government stated that "every reliance was placed on Mr. Chamberlain's methods and motives" because they were "designed to promote world peace, even though

the terms may be considered high.”¹ Later, Mr. Mackenzie King, the Canadian Prime Minister, issued a statement that he had sent Mr. Chamberlain a cablegram expressing the “deep satisfaction with which he and his Cabinet learned of the proposed meeting with Herr Hitler.” The statement continued: “I am sure the whole Canadian people will warmly approve this far-seeing and truly noble action on the part of Mr. Chamberlain. Direct personal contact is the most effective means of clearing away the tension and misunderstandings that have marked the course of events in Europe in recent months. Mr. Chamberlain has taken emphatically the right step.”

Similarly, the Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Lyons, sent a cablegram to Mr. Chamberlain in which he expressed his warmest admiration and renewed assurances of support. At a meeting of the Australian Cabinet afterwards it was decided “to support Great Britain to the fullest degree in any action that may be deemed internationally necessary.” Mr. Lyons then added that he had advised Great Britain that Australia “was in the completest accord with the policy as outlined by Mr. Chamberlain and reaffirmed by Sir John Simon at Lanark.” The *Melbourne Herald*, in a leading article the same day, declared: “Australia yearns for peace, and believes that the interests of freedom and justice will be best served by supporting Great Britain.”

South Africa was at first guarded in its references to the European situation, if not openly critical of the British Government’s policy. But soon the tide turned, and even the radical *Cape Argus* declared on Sep-

¹ Several of the quotations in this chapter have been taken from *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* during the recent periods of crisis.

tember 27th that Mr. Chamberlain deserved nothing but praise for his conduct during the negotiations. "At the gravest moment of history since 1914," this newspaper continued, "the first reflection is that nothing could have surpassed Mr. Chamberlain's heroic effort to keep peace in Europe."

If Mr. Chamberlain's effort had broken on the rock of Nazi aggression, then the Nazis would have united "not only the British nation and the Empire, but four-fifths of the peoples of the globe." Similarly, the *Johannesburg Star* believed that "a plain warning to Germany against recourse to violence would command the support of the British Dominions and Colonies and the great bulk of the United States"; while the *Cape Times* asked indignantly: "How long can the world tolerate a state of things in which it is projected from one crisis to another. Some great effort must be made to face that position."

The Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mr. Savage, declared that his country's attitude could be summed up in one sentence: "Wherever Britain is, we must be." He expressed the opinion that "history would record the highest admiration of Mr. Chamberlain's gesture."

That was the first reaction. But as the crisis developed, and efforts for appeasement seemed to fail, these overseas observers became less concerned to preserve peace at all costs, and eventually were united in a grim determination to resist armed aggression in Europe. "The democracies have gone to almost perilous lengths to avoid a clash," said a South African paper that had hitherto regarded British foreign policy with some misgiving; and this attitude was confirmed by the South African Prime Minister, General Hertzöf, once an

enemy of Britain, when he declared categorically that "no country had the right to drag in South Africa, but all free nations had certain obligations, and these would be faithfully carried out."

Practically all the Canadian newspapers now adopted a similar tone, and at this juncture the Canadian Corps Association, representing seventy thousand ex-service men, stated publicly that if "Britain had to fight Canada had to fight." The statement continued: "Solidarity in the Empire at this time should have a retarding effect on aggressors and prevent bloodshed. The ex-service men of Canada are looking forward this time to a stand being taken by the Dominion Government in line with the trust which has been ours to fulfil on previous occasions."

Similarly, the *Montreal Gazette* stated: "If Mr. King issued a clear-cut statement that this country stands solidly behind Mr. Chamberlain, and will continue to so stand whether in peace or war, the great majority of Canadians would acclaim him." Admittedly these hints were tacitly disregarded by a Liberal Government placed in a very difficult position, but according to the interpretation of Canadian officials the crisis did disclose that "in a conflict involving the Empire, Canadian public opinion would have forced the country into some sort of action."

Meanwhile Mr. Adam Hamilton, Leader of the National Party in New Zealand, had conveyed a promise to the Government that "in the event of war the Opposition would act in full co-operation in seeing that New Zealand took its full share of responsibilities as a unit of the Empire." Then the New Zealand Prime Minister sent a message to the British Government expressing appreciation of "the full and detailed informa-

tion about the international situation supplied during the crisis," and saying that "he would be grateful if Mr. Chamberlain could be informed that the New Zealand Government most earnestly supports his continued and determined efforts for the peace of Europe and the world, which it sincerely trusts will be crowned with success."

On behalf of the fighting races of India, from which the Indian Army is recruited, and which furnished 680,000 combatants in the Great War, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the Unionist Premier of the Punjab, made the following remarkable statement: "The peace of the world hangs in the balance, but whatever happens the Punjab—the sword-arm of India—will stand by you through thick and thin. Our man-power and resources would be placed ungrudgingly at the disposal of Great Britain in the service of our Motherland. And let me add that this offer is made in no mean, bargaining spirit, but on behalf of a people who would consider it an insult and a stigma on the fair name of the Punjab to offer conditional help and support to a friend in need." Great Britain was also offered the unqualified support of the Indian Princes.

Finally, the Australian Prime Minister declared that his Government was doing all it could to co-operate with Mr. Chamberlain in his effort to preserve peace in Europe, and machinery now existed to place the Dominion on an emergency basis in the event of war. Moreover, the Australian Press wholeheartedly praised the British Government for its policy in the crisis, the *Sydney Morning Herald* epitomizing public opinion when it stated: "No great nation before has made such sacrifices and exhibited such forbearance in the interests of peace. A small State cannot further abase itself when its

efforts towards conciliation are treated with the contempt Hitler has shown."

Thus the Empire demonstrated its solidarity, and it should be clear to anyone who reads between the lines of the above declarations that if Munich had failed immediately there would have been no hesitation in the Britain overseas. As a final proof of this important hypothesis can be cited the fact that ever since that crisis the British Dominions have been accelerating their various programmes of rearmament.

2

Undoubtedly Canada was moved to speed-up its rearmament plan by the lessons of the crisis. Australian reactions were similar, while South Africa, New Zealand, India and the Colonies also took practical steps immediately after the crisis to readjust their defences to the new situation. These steps have been described carefully in preceding chapters, but it might be of value to recount some of the particular defence warnings instilled in overseas minds by Munich.

One Australian correspondent stated that the view generally heard in conversation after the crisis was that "the jettisoning of the whole system of East European security and the Franco-Soviet Treaty brought only a temporary armistice, which will be marked by an intensified arms race." Then most Australian newspapers emphasized that the military lesson for Australia and New Zealand was that the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis had brought Australasia closer to the danger zone than had ever been imagined possible since the Great War.

A particular statement was that "in the event of war

Britain might be unable in the early stages to spare war-ships to defend Australasia against Japan"; while it was recognized that "the Australasian naval forces are negligible compared with Japan's." An important declaration was made by the Attorney-General, Mr. Menzies: "So long as the Empire is constituted as at present, Australia cannot be neutral in a war in which Great Britain is involved. The extent and means of her participation, or whether Australians should fight on their own or on foreign soil, are questions determinable by Australia or the enemy. It would be suicidal for a Dominion to have its own foreign policy regardless of whether it was that of the United Kingdom's or of other Dominions."

Mr. W. M. Hughes, Australia's famous war-time Prime Minister, then declared with characteristic vigour that "Australia must arm to the teeth"; and shortly afterwards the Government announced those big increases in the armed forces that have been described elsewhere. Mr. Curtin, the Labour leader, provoked a record uproar when he expressed an opinion in the House that Australia should consider only the defence of her own country, and that "self-reliance was more important than participation in Europe's perennial disputes."

Immediately after the crisis South Africa's Defence Minister, Mr. Pirow, made arrangements to visit Europe and investigate the situation at first hand. Perhaps it is sufficiently significant that he spent some time in consultation with the British Government, and announced his intention of purchasing "as many British aeroplanes as the Government will let us have," for the simple reason that they were "the best in the world." Referring to the Munich Agreement, Mr. Pirow said that the Union Government held the view that the talks should

be followed up to find a permanent basis for world peace, but "it did not favour peace at any price."

New Zealand's reaction from Munich was much the same as that of Australia. The Government at once took steps to hasten the large-scale expansion of the Royal New Zealand Air Force described in a previous chapter, and also made arrangements for the storage of huge quantities of petrol for use in event of war. Finally, New Zealand called the Pacific Defence Conference that has been discussed elsewhere.

3

During six months these preparations were rapidly advanced, and coincidentally public opinion in the Dominions had a useful breathing-space. It will have been observed from the above quotations that from the first overseas opinion was tacitly in favour of a somewhat stiffer attitude towards the European dictators than that encouraged by Mr. Chamberlain's skilful and sincere, but fundamentally foredoomed policy of appeasement. When Hitler finally dismembered Czechoslovakia in March 1939, the Dominions did not hesitate, one and all, to register their profound indignation, and to present at last, unequivocally, their united, official promises of complete support for any restraining action that might be taken. A short record of this culminating reaction reads like the climacteric of a symphonic poem.

"There can be no defence for the occurrences of the last week," declared the Canadian Prime Minister, speaking in the House of Commons on March 20th. "What is needed now is to take stock and be prepared

for all possible emergencies. So far as Canada is concerned, the Government is ready to take part at any time in those consultations which the British Prime Minister indicated will take place.

"If there was a prospect of an aggressor's launching an attack on Great Britain, I have no doubt what the decision of the Canadian people and the Canadian Parliament would be.

"We should regard it as an act of aggression menacing freedom in all parts of the British Commonwealth."

On the same day a statement was made to the Press by the Canadian Conservative leader, Dr. R. J. Manion, in which he declared that his party joined at once with the Government in assuring the world of Canadian unity in the face of the European situation. "Probably the only way to maintain world peace," he went on, "is by the liberty-loving democracies—Britain and the Dominions, the United States, France and the smaller nations—announcing clearly their determination to stand together in a solid front against the tyranny of the Hitlerian dictatorship, for no one knows when and where this man, driven by his mad ambition for conquest, will strike next."

These declarations should have been sufficient, but were not strong enough to satisfy the more earnest patriots of Canada and the Empire, and therefore on March 31st Mr. Lapointe, the Canadian Minister of Justice, made the following categorical declaration: "There can be no question of Canada's remaining aloof if Britain is involved in war. If any dictator has made up his mind that the British Commonwealth is going to be disrupted, he is basing his projects on an absolute fallacy."

South African opinion, both journalistic and Govern-

mental, swiftly followed a similar consolidation. The *Cape Argus*, once such an inveterate opponent of any policy foreshadowing entanglement in European wars, described the rape of Czecho-Slovakia as "a deliberately plotted act of unprovoked aggression, committed in defiance of all Nazi assurances." The *Johannesburg Star*, also anti-Chamberlain, declared that South Africa must "recognize and face realities, and face them in the same spirit as in August 1914, following the invasion of Belgium."

All South African Defence Force leave was cancelled at once and reservists were called up. Public opinion was greatly stirred by the action of the German Government in dispatching a Note to the Union, stating that if permission for German immigrants to enter South-West Africa were withheld, the Germans would "not be responsible for the consequences"; and the final step was taken when the taciturn General Hertzog, Prime Minister of the Union, declared in the House of Assembly on April 12th:

"Great Britain is South Africa's greatest friend. Thanks to the attitude of that friend ever since the Anglo-Boer War, and after, when the Republics were first handed back, and later when the whole of South Africa was given to the people, South Africa possesses the status she enjoys to-day.

"That country is to-day our great friend, and I shall be the last to do anything towards breaking that friendship."

General Hertzog then stated that he would not be so foolish as to say that South Africa would remain outside any war. South Africa could not sit back in neutrality without reference to circumstances.

The South African Prime Minister's chief lieutenant,

General Smuts, amplified this remarkable statement in an address to the United Party on April 14th. He said that the world was passing through a most dangerous period. Preparations for war had never been so great in the history of humanity. South Africa should stick to her friends, therefore, although certain elements would prefer that she should be independent. South Africa could be the victim of an attack by any enemy, but being a member of the group of democratic countries was a guarantee of peace. South Africa's gold was the biggest attraction.

Then General Smuts paid a striking tribute to Great Britain, saying that South Africa must try to retain Britain's friendship, as without her help South Africa would be helpless.

"We are lucky," he said, "to have Britain's fleet to defend us, otherwise we should be helpless in time of danger with our thousands of miles of coastline. We are indeed fortunate that by the grace of Britain we have a free, democratic country. We are greatly indebted to Britain for this system of democracy, and for not having to be dictated to by a dictator, but to have the freedom of our own Government and freedom to make our own laws.

"I therefore implore you, stand together and keep our overseas friends. If we lose our friends and get into trouble we can be sure that South Africa will be the cockpit of the world's troubles."

It is unnecessary to devote so much space to Australian and New Zealand reactions to the events of March, because these Dominions had previously given their unqualified support to Britain and complete assurances of immediate military help. But it may be as well to complete the picture by mentioning that the

Australian Cabinet held a long emergency meeting immediately after the German annexation of Czechoslovakia, and sent Mr. Chamberlain a message afterwards announcing the Dominion's utmost support of the new British policy.

Britain's firm stand has been welcomed throughout Australia, especially in that section of the Ministerial Press which, in September, strongly attacked the Munich policy. The proposal that all nations willing to help check German aggression should consult together was universally approved from the first. The common view was that "Hitler must be stopped before he goes too far and that Australia must sink or swim with Britain." The Sydney *Telegraph* declared: "If we fight it will be because this week has shown up Nazi Germany in her true colours as a country ruled by unscrupulous adventurers who regard diplomacy as a game of cynical deceit and war as an instrument of national policy."

"New Zealand will be found wherever Britain is, if Britain is in trouble," said the New Zealand Prime Minister during that fateful week of March. "There has never been any doubt about New Zealand's loyalty," he continued; and he suggested that the British Government should immediately call a conference of peace-loving nations in an endeavour to remove the causes of wars.

Any action that the Government might take to support Britain in her attitude towards problems of defence would have the whole-hearted support of every member of the National party, declared the Leader of the New Zealand Opposition. "Our people," he added, "are united in their determination to support British policy in meeting one of the gravest international situations in history."

Therefore the intransigent behaviour of the European dictators has served at least one useful purpose. It has evoked a conclusive demonstration that if Great Britain were forced to enter another war, then she would have the almost certain support of the most powerful Empire this world has ever known. The point is worth making.

4

I must confess that before the crises it had been my intention to provide in this place a careful analysis of the various reasons why the Dominions could not isolate themselves from any war in which Great Britain might take part. Thanks to the activities of the European dictators during the last year such a study is now unnecessary, but a brief survey may be made of the chief points that would have been discussed.

It is useful for this purpose to regard the British Empire as a large family. At the head stands the United Kingdom of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Canada is the eldest son, and the other children are Australia, South Africa and New Zealand, while Eire and India may be described as close family relations. The colonies in Africa, the West and East Indies, the Mediterranean, Asia, the Pacific and Newfoundland are children who have not yet grown up, but who will acquire the right to govern themselves as they become sufficiently old or experienced and capable.

Foreign observers sometimes find it difficult to understand how the nations of the British Commonwealth can at once be united and independent of each other. Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand are self-governing States which manage their own affairs

entirely. India and Newfoundland will soon be in the same position; the modern Eire could not very well be in any other position. The British Dominions are as completely independent as any country in Europe, if not more so than many, electing their own democratic parliaments, levying their own taxes, creating their own strong defence forces, accepting dictation from nowhere and intensely proud of their youthful achievements in every department of civilized endeavour.

Yet at the same time these sovereign States, situated in different parts of the world, and separated from each other by thousands of miles of ocean and land, are members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and present, in affairs of international politics and trade, a united front to the world. How is this possible?

First, the British Dominions are kindred to each other as members of the same racial family. They share the same blood, racial traditions, language and philosophy of life. Second, they have very strong mutual interests of trade and defence. The British Dominions buy more manufactured goods from Great Britain than all the rest of the world put together, while in return the Mother Country absorbs three-quarters of the foodstuffs and raw materials produced by the Dominions. Therefore the Mother Country and her grown-up children overseas must necessarily stand shoulder to shoulder at times of crisis and present a united front to the world. It is in the natural order of things for them to do so.

But it must be clearly understood that Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand do not subordinate their foreign policies to that of Great Britain. Before the Mother Country declares her attitude towards an international question she must consult the Dominions. There is no written law to this effect, and

sometimes the consultation may be only a matter of form, but the fact remains that Britain cannot take an important step in her political relations unless she ascertains the views of the Dominions first. The British Empire is therefore a family of nations, bound together not by force but by strong bonds of affection, mutual interest and legal custom. If you were a grown-up son who lived apart from your mother but held her in deep affection, selling her most of your produce, would you not be at once independent and under a deep filial obligation, especially in times of stress?

Untravelled Englishmen have often asked me if the Dominions would support Britain in event of war. The question itself reveals what is, in fact, the only weakness of the British Empire, namely, the ignorance of the various peoples of the Empire about each other. It should be perfectly obvious to anyone who has made a casual study of Imperial affairs that the Dominions would have to support Britain in event of war, whether they wanted to or not.

On the one hand, the economic and social systems of the Dominions are closely bound up with those of the Mother Country. On the other hand, none of the Dominions possesses the money, man-power or armaments to preserve its independence should Britain be defeated in a war. Undoubtedly some of the Dominions would be in a worse position than others. Australia and New Zealand would necessarily support the Mother Country before Canada and South Africa. Their economic and social systems are at present almost inextricably intertwined with those of Britain. But Canada and South Africa are not much better off.

Many Canadian strategists work on the assumption that an expeditionary force will never again leave

Canada. It is frequently asserted that this Dominion is in the happy position, *vis-à-vis* the United States, of being able to sever the Imperial connection at will without coincidentally committing national *hara-kiri*. And certainly the United States would never allow an invader to establish a foothold on North American soil, while it would obviously be against her interests to permit wholesale economic dislocation in Canada. But thinking Canadians realize well enough, even if they do not often utter the thought aloud, that if Britain were removed from the international scene, then Canada would be at the mercy of, as well as under the protection of her powerful neighbour. It is unlikely that the United States would take advantage of such a situation, but the thinking Canadian knows that it is better to be balanced comfortably between two great forces than to be the helpless satellite of one of them. It would not be in the interests of Canada to see Great Britain rendered impotent as a world Power, and therefore Canada would be obliged to assist Great Britain if that country were involved to the death.

Mr. Pirow has pointed out that 60 per cent of the South African population has no British blood in its veins, and consequently that "sentimental appeals to them to support Britain would be meaningless," so that South Africa would have to be "very careful about participating in any war." Moreover, this Dominion has enjoyed a great access of prosperity in recent years, based mainly on the demand for gold, and there is nothing like prosperity to induce an independent attitude. But the position of South Africa in the event of the defeat of the Royal Navy and the collapse of British power would be, to say the least of it, exceedingly unfortunate. Some South Africans might find spiritual

affinities with Germans and Italians in times of peace, but it is unlikely that these would endure in the face of invasion, deprivation and forcible incorporation in a completely alien fatherland.

The British Dominions to-day, varying the metaphor used earlier in this section, are very much in the position of prosperous householders in a civilized community who would be quite unable to protect themselves if the local police force were disbanded. The defences of the Dominions are adequate for local needs within the framework of Imperial defence, and might play a brave part in that scheme. No less an authority than Lord Hankey has recently stated: "If I were the Chief of the General Staff of a country likely to become involved in war with the United Kingdom I would warn my Government, 'Beware of underrating the Dominions.'"¹ But I think my survey shows equally that the Dominions would be wise not to underrate the prestige of Britain as a factor in saving them time, money and trouble. It is the vital interest of the Dominions to preserve that prestige.

That is my argument, or, as I would prefer to put it, statement of the facts from which there can be no dissension. The quotations at the beginning of this chapter, evoked by that curate's egg, the Czecho-Slovakian crisis, confirm everything that has been said subsequently, and foreign Powers would indeed do well to digest them. If Britain did not go to war over Czecho-Slovakia, and the temper of her people and the people of the Dominions was so resolute and ready, then it can be imagined what response would greet a wider issue.

Yet foreign observers can be so blind. I once talked with a German who had spent some time in Australia.

¹ Broadcast talk from London on December 19, 1938.

He would report to his authorities, he said with characteristic bravado, that Australians would not fight in a British war again—because Australians did not like Englishmen and, at that time, all the Australian universities preached pacifism. The poor fool could not see that Australians were Englishmen, and, being so, never practised what they preached.

Lord Hankey continued that broadcast talk with the following words: "I find it difficult to conceive circumstances in which this country is likely to become involved in a major war on an issue in which popular sentiment in the Dominions would not be overwhelmingly sympathetic to our cause."

Arsenal For The Pacific

I

The recent decision to manufacture British military aircraft in Australian factories, following the establishment of great Canadian plant for the same purpose, has profound significance in the scheme of modern Imperial strategy. Not only will this step greatly strengthen the highly vulnerable positions of Australia herself and neighbouring New Zealand, but it will provide a very valuable addition to the defensive strength of the Empire at large. The move implies a translation of what had hitherto been a weakness in the Imperial structure into a source of great potential strength.

A reiterated lament of British naval and military experts in recent years has been the wide dispersal of the Empire's constituent members. It has been the fashion to regard this dispersal as highly dangerous in the event of a war involving the British peoples as a whole. The task of protecting Dominions and possessions in every quarter of the globe might present very real difficulties to the Mother Country; and these difficulties had been increased by the emergence of a potentially hostile group of Powers—Germany, Italy and Japan—who could at once menace British communications and interests in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Pacific area.

Then the experts invited us to consider how the task

of the Royal Navy would have been complicated during the Great War if there had been no Anglo-Japanese Agreement to keep the Far East and the Pacific quiet. They pointed out that during that conflict the Allies had undisputed command of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, thanks to Italian naval weakness, and, later, Italian acquiescence. They declared that in any future war such remote British Dominions as Australia and New Zealand, isolated perhaps from Europe by enemy action along the lines of communication, might be entirely at the mercy of a heavily armed neighbour.

The growth of air power had, according to expert observers, worsened the position. At first it was believed that the Navy itself would be helpless against aerial action; then it was pointed out that a small country like Great Britain would be deprived at last of the advantages of its historical insular position, and would have to withstand devastating aerial attack. There were now very grave disadvantages in concentrating the bulk of our munition factories and reserves of material in Great Britain, no part of which was beyond the range of air attack launched from the European continent. Why, the ordinary commercial airlines advertised journeys to Berlin in $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours, Brussels in $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours, Frankfurt in $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours and Hamburg in 3 hours. Then British communications across the seven seas, no matter the convoy strength, would be similarly vulnerable to air power. Italy and Germany at that time had six times the military aircraft of Britain and France. To quote an authority:

"One of the vital factors in the issue of any major war in the future will be failure or success in the effort to disarm the opposing side in the air while maintaining the flow of one's own sources of aircraft supply. Each belligerent

will set himself to disturb and disorganize his enemy's munitionment, and especially his air munitionment. Aircraft and aero-engine factories, one cannot doubt, will be a primary objective of air attack. The result of the war may depend on whether the one side or the other can immobilize the opposing air force by means of such attack."¹

Those were the fears, and they are still very real. But—it is now realized that the medal has the usual two sides; in other words, that the actual structure of the Empire, in conjunction with the weapon of air power, can be used to our own great advantage. The first hope was the arrangement to build military aircraft in Canada. Then came the Australian plan.

Briefly, the object of these schemes is to increase Canada's and Australia's potential output of air frames and engines by building new central assembly plants in those Dominions. All kinds of warplanes, but particularly long-range, multi-engine bombers, reconnaissance aircraft, and, to a lesser extent, flying boats will be built to British Air Ministry specifications, supplying the Canadian and Australian Air Forces with the machines they have hitherto lacked. Surplus production might furnish the needs of New Zealand and of British bases and possessions in the East. Speeded-up in wartime, these same factories would produce vital supplies of aircraft for the Mother Country herself. In any case, they would relieve British manufacturers of the burden of supplying machines for overseas at a time when Britain's own expansion programme demands prime attention. A final advantage would be the guarantee of standardization of types in the air forces of the Empire. Australia had previously

¹ See article by Dr. J. M. Spaight, C.B., C.B.E., in *The Empire Review*, October 1938.

been forced to purchase planes from the United States.

Mention of the United States recalls the fact that to relieve British manufacturers orders for training planes were placed in America by the Air Ministry last year. The contract for Harvard planes was recently increased from 200 to 400 and that of the Hudson from 200 to 250, all of which are to be delivered by the end of 1939. Here is another very useful means of effecting the strategic diffusion of Empire supplies. But the developments in the British Dominions are by far the most important.

2

Canada is particularly well-equipped to take a full share in the scheme, for she has for some time possessed a modern aircraft industry. At Vancouver the famous Boeing Company of Seattle has its Canadian branch. At Montreal there are the independent branch of the American Fairchild Company, and also the factory of Canadian Vickers, Ltd. Then there are several Canadian firms that have had special experience of aircraft work, such as the National Steel Car Company, and the Canadian Car and Foundry Company of Montreal, Fleet Aircraft, Ltd., of Fort Erie and Noorduyn Aircraft Ltd., of St. Laurent, Quebec.

Therefore the principal objective of Sir Hardman Lever's British official mission last year was to confer with leaders of Canadian industry and Government officials as to the production of plans whereby Canada's aircraft firms could augment their existing capacity to manufacture aircraft components. The British mission began work in Canada early in August 1938, and had

finalized matters within a month. The work of this very successful mission deserves wider recognition than it has actually received during the alarms and excursions of the last year.¹

As a result of these negotiations two new central factories have been erected in Canada, one at Montreal and one at Toronto. Further plant may be erected at Vancouver and Fort William. A central company operates the main establishments, and its board of nine directors comprises the chiefs of the manufacturing companies concerned. To establish effective liaison between the companies and the British Government, a special "minority" board of three, two of them prominent Canadian bankers, has been formed.

In addition to long-range bombers, the subject of the initial contracts placed with the Canadian industry, other types of aircraft for Britain are to be built, some of them, perhaps, at the proposed Vancouver and Fort William factories. These arrangements are to be supplementary to those already obtaining under which several Canadian firms manufacture aeroplanes of British design for the Canadian Government.

No time limit is set to this long-range programme. The Canadian factories may form a powerful reserve supplementary to home resources for as long as the Empire's needs in air protection may require. Bombers built in Canada will if necessary be flown without military load across the Atlantic ocean to England. Dr. Spaight has taken this as inspiration for an in-

¹ The personnel of the Mission consisted of Sir Hardman Lever, Chairman of the Air Ministry's Advisory Committee on Royal Air Force contracts; Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Sir Edward Ellington; Mr. F. Handley Page, representing the British aircraft industry; and Mr. A. H. Self, second Deputy Under-Secretary of State, who is chiefly concerned at the Air Ministry with Royal Air Force contracts.

teresting conjecture: "When the Armistice came in 1918 the new Handley Page four-engined bomber was standing ready to start for Berlin. To-day Mr. Handley Page is a member of the air mission to Canada. It would be a strange destiny for him if some day another and still greater bomber of his designing were waiting in Canada to start on a far longer errand to the East—an errand of which the ultimate goal might again be an enemy's capital. Montreal and Botwood may some day be vital links in our chain of air defence."¹

Sir Kingsley Wood, the British Air Minister, in his comment on the Canadian plan, stated at the time that "with the range which aircraft are now attaining, this development will augment our potential strength considerably." And indeed the aircraft scheduled for production in Canada will be easily capable of following over the ocean—and at much higher speeds—the pioneer flights of the Short flying-boats and the Short-Mayo "pick-a-back" *Mercury*.

Under the new scheme eleven companies are co-operating in the Canadian aircraft effort. An idea of the scope of these well-established firms may be obtained from a review of their general activities. Six of the firms assemble and "service" aero engines, and a few firms make instruments, trainers, seaplane floats and other components. Among these companies are several with close British contacts. The de Havilland Aircraft of Canada, Ltd., is a subsidiary of the British aeroplane and aero engine firm. It recently delivered a batch of twenty-five Tiger Moth trainers to the Royal Canadian Air Force, and it also builds Dragon Rapide seaplanes.

Similarly Canadian Vickers, Ltd., has been building

¹ See article in *The Empire Review*, October 1938.

Supermarine Stranraer flying boats for Canadian military use. It may be noted that these are large and fast twin-engined biplanes, at present included in the equipment of the "general reconnaissance" squadrons of the Royal Air Force. This company was recently engaged on a contract for the supply of fast all-metal monoplanes for aerial photography and survey work. In the same way, the Boeing Aircraft of Canada, Ltd., have been building Blackburn Shark "torpedo planes," while the Fairchild Aircraft, Ltd., has been busy on a Canadian Governmental contract for Bristol Blenheim twin-engined monoplane bombers, at the time the fastest war machines of their category.

Then the aircraft division of the National Steel Car Corporation began the production at their new Toronto factory of Westland Lysander monoplanes, high-wing craft capable of a top speed of about 230 to 240 miles per hour, recently replacing older machines in British Army co-operation squadrons. And the Ottawa Car Manufacturing Company has been assembling Avro Type 626 "multi-purpose" trainers, while holding a considerable contract for the reconditioning of Canadian service aeroplanes.

It is understood that the Canadian aircraft firms above enumerated have undertaken to maintain, during the next ten years, a manufacturing capacity available, if required, for a rapid expansion of orders from Great Britain. But it is certainly possible to see in the initial decision to build bombers in Canada, to quote Dr. Spaight again, "something larger in its implications and more significant than the creation of a reserve source of supply for the Air Force." Indeed, it must be conceived at once as "the first step in a process restoring to us some part of the advantage we

derived for centuries from our insular position and of which the coming of mechanical flight went far to deprive us."

3

The ability of Australia to fulfil the new task allotted her cannot be disputed. Before the British Mission visited this Dominion a large aircraft factory had already been established by the powerful Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation, representing the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, the Electrolytic Zinc Company, the Orient Steam Navigation Company, Imperial Chemical Industries and General Motors, and this, in the words of one observer, "might well become one of the major producers of air equipment in the world." At the same time a subsidiary company of the de Havilland Aircraft Company, Ltd., had established workshops at Mascot, and another company with Sir Alan Cobham as a director had been formed to establish an aircraft factory at Sydney. Australia is anxious to develop advanced secondary industries of this type, and output could be adapted to serve the needs of civil aviation, both in Australia and in the Pacific area generally.

The British Mission sent to Australia at the beginning of 1939 was again headed by the very capable Sir Hardman Lever,¹ and it is interesting to note that the initiative of the Australian Government was primarily responsible for the move, a fact affording additional

¹ Other members of the Mission were Sir Donald Banks, D.S.O., Permanent Under-Secretary for Air, and Air Marshal Sir Arthur Longmore, D.S.O., late Commandant, Imperial Defence College, besides a number of technical experts.

evidence of the close co-operation existing between the Australian and British Governments in matters of defence policy. The Australian Air Board at once began a preliminary survey of existing industrial resources in the Dominion which could be utilized for the manufacture of air frames, aero engines and component parts.

The British Government had several objects in view when it dispatched this mission. For one, it was hoped to sponsor the creation of an aircraft industry in Australia which could supply aircraft of suitable design not only for the defence of the Dominion itself, but also for the protection of British bases and possessions in the East and Far East. Such machines would be long-range multi-engine bombers and reconnaissance aircraft, and, to a lesser extent, flying boats.

Moreover, the difficulty of obtaining the most recent types of warplanes from overworked British factories had forced the Australian Government to order military aircraft from the United States, and to arrange for the construction of American machines under licence in Australia. This was another good reason for sending the mission. I quote that informed writer, Group Capt. L. G. S. Payne: "The Air Ministry has always considered it undesirable that Dominion Air Forces should be equipped with foreign aircraft, except as a purely temporary expedient. The reason is that this would prevent standardization of types in Empire Air Forces, and might involve supply difficulties in time of war."¹

And once again the mission achieved its important object in an incredibly short space of time. On March 21st the Australian Prime Minister announced that his Cabinet had finally agreed in principle to the

¹ See the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, December 30, 1938.

proposals of the mission for the manufacture of aircraft in Australia, and a day or two later the British Air Minister stated in the House of Commons that the Government had decided to accept generally and put into immediate operation the recommendations of the mission.¹

"Immediate action will be taken for the manufacture in Australia of air frames of British designs suitable for Australian requirements, and also for those of the Royal Air Force in the Far East," said Sir Kingsley Wood. He then revealed that the report of the mission had emphasized "the extent to which engineering resources have been developed in recent years in Australia," and he stated that full advantage would be taken of these resources by a system of widespread sub-contracting throughout the engineering industry. This would accelerate production in peace and create a capacity for expansion in emergency.

At the same time arrangements were being made for the supply from England of engines and certain materials, as well as items of equipment, these pending completion of arrangements for their full manufacture in Australia. Finally, the mission had reported a sufficiency of skilled labour in Australia with regard to the scheme. Sir Kingsley concluded: "This scheme is an important contribution to Empire defence, and the House will appreciate the success which has attended the efforts of the mission, who have performed their task in Australia with great expedition."

It is generally considered that the new Australian aircraft industries will be able to produce from 300 to 400 warplanes in peace-time, and upwards of 1,000 yearly in time of war. Such a production would un-

¹ See the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, March 24, 1939.

doubtedly enable this Dominion not only to satisfy her own requirements, but also to meet the Air Force needs of Aden, India, Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, Hong Kong and, possibly, South Africa and New Zealand.

The intention is to establish central assembly plants, similar to those in Canada, which would assemble aircraft and aero engines from component parts manufactured by a large number of allied firms. It is expected actually that the contemplated expansion will provide employment for an additional 6,000 to 9,000 workmen, and permit construction of machines each year in time of peace to the value of about £9,000,000. It has been stated in some quarters that the full scheme will ultimately mean the investment of £30,000,000 of British capital in Australia. In a broadcast only a few weeks before his unhappy death the Prime Minister, Mr. Lyons, urged Australia to subordinate all sectional interests to the imperative question of defence, "on which the Dominion would soon be spending £500,000 a week."

But Australia scarcely needed that injunction. This Dominion has never been slow to answer the call to arms. Her enthusiastic adoption of the aircraft scheme is only the latest example of this, and will be followed by still greater contributions to Imperial defence.

3

After concluding the Australian arrangement, Sir Hardman Lever's mission sailed on to New Zealand, where they investigated the capacity of that Dominion to manufacture aircraft, and concluded that there were distinct possibilities, which should be developed in the

near future. It should be noted, however, that responsible New Zealand opinion is inclined to feel that the proposal is over-ambitious, and that it would be more practicable to obtain warplanes from the Australian factories.

It should also be remembered that the schemes for aircraft manufacture in Canada and Australia will not interfere with interim plans for the supply to the overseas air forces of modern types of British warplanes. I again have Group Capt. L. G. S. Payne's authority for it that many military aeroplanes of the most recent design are scheduled for dispatch from Great Britain to the Dominions during the present year.¹

South Africa has already received a first consignment of Hurricane eight-gun fighters, to be followed by a further batch, so that pilots of the South African Air Force may be able to familiarize themselves with the latest types of fighters in use in R.A.F. service squadrons. And this summer the thirty Vickers Wellington bombers purchased by the New Zealand Government are being flown by easy stages from England to that Dominion.

Nothing can detract from the fact, however, that the plans to manufacture warplanes in the Dominions represent a tremendous advance in Imperial preparedness. The recent formation flight of the Vickers Wellesley bombers to Australia in record time demonstrated the great possibilities of the new development. Military aircraft could be flown easily from Australia to New Zealand, Singapore, India and Ceylon, where the important naval and air base is being established at Trincomalee. It has been pointed out that the ability to fly aircraft from Britain to the East in war-time

¹ See the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, February 3, 1938.

would depend upon the co-operation of France as an ally and of a strong, effective France. Aircraft from Canada and Australia could supply practically the whole of the Southern Hemisphere without any such licence.

Indeed, those tables of relative advantage have been neatly turned. Hitherto the Empire was vulnerable because of its protracted lines of communication and the weakness of the individual members isolated from the source of strength, Britain, which was itself highly vulnerable because of the liability of its munitions and aircraft factories to be devastated at close range. But the position now is—or soon will be—that the most important outlying parts of the Empire may supply their own air weapons, or receive them from nearby, while the Mother Country will no longer be dependent solely upon its own exposed factories for the constant stream of aircraft that may be required in an emergency.

The experts have always agreed that a chief factor of success in any totalitarian war of the future would be the ability to maintain supplies, particularly of aircraft, in the face of constant attack. To quote Rougeron, that cool-headed French authority, the rise of air-power “embarrasses those countries who will be constrained to produce their war *matériel* under the blows of a hostile aviation. It favours those who can supply a front with *matériel* produced beyond the range of that action.” But Rougeron has also said that “the industrial development of the countries of the British Empire lends itself to immediate utilization for aerial or military needs”; and, thanks to the co-operation of Canada and Australia, the British Empire will now be in the happy position of a Power possessing well-dispersed, comparatively invulnerable sources of supply.

The far-flung structure of the Empire has at last proved to be not a weakness but a positive strength.

It is no exaggeration to say that this possibility represents one of the most important recent developments in the scheme of British Imperial strategy.

Chapter 15

The Overseas Idiom

I

I often wonder if Rome knew less of Britannia than London knows of the British Dominions. Before visiting the Dominions I considered myself fairly well-versed in their geography and history. Here were lands of mighty hills and plains (very like the California of cowboy films) inhabited by fine young "Britishers" engaged in an adventurous species of gentleman farming, and invariably on horseback in wide-brimmed Stetson hats. I realized that these admirable people were their own masters to a certain extent, and yet "they belonged to us." Indeed, many of them were relatives and friends who had emigrated "to make good," and who did actually return from time to time with very free-and-easy manners and an astonishing supply of loose cash.

Looking forward to overseas cities before that remarkable journey, I had exciting visions of great, broad avenues, dazzlingly white buildings, and palms, yes, mostly palms. Memories of South American photographs depicting such places as Buenos Aires and Valparaiso constantly flashed across my ignorant mind. These new countries were to be clean, beautiful, free, Utopian, at once a door to sanctuary and opportunity after the overcrowded Europe left behind.

It is unnecessary to detail all the disappointments and pleasant surprises that followed this first, immature

expectation. Naturally the Dominions were quite different from my English view. For one thing, there was a most astonishing lack of clean-limbed young horsemen in broad-brimmed hats engaged in an adventurous species of gentleman farming. But I did remark from the beginning that life in these Dominions was strangely different from the life to which I had been accustomed.

The people belonged to the same race, and were engaged in similar occupations, but their customs and mannerisms, even their social and cultural ideas, were curiously different. It seemed that there was some emerging difference in what I am going to term the idiom of overseas life. To explore that difference briefly might therefore be of value in the scheme of this otherwise essentially factual book. For at the present time we must above all things come to a close understanding with our cousins overseas. My whole argument is for more effective co-operation in defence between the Mother Country and the Dominions, but it is impossible to co-operate without understanding.

My dictionary defines the word "idiom" as "a form of expression peculiar to a language." Thus the man who goes "drowning" in Wiltshire has no designs upon his own life, but attends to water-meadows for a livelihood, and the word has an idiomatic use peculiar to the locality. Therefore if I attempt to explain differences between, say, the alignments of political parties bearing the same names in Britain and New Zealand, I can conveniently refer to differences in idiom, for that is what they comprise, since each country possesses political parties that are, whatever their similarity of name and constitution, peculiar to the one land alone. And my point is that although the Englishman admits

such differences to exist between his own country and foreign nations—sometimes he actually exaggerates such differences—he is completely unaware that they are slowly evolving as between Britain and the Dominions themselves.

2

I shall review the factors that might have been responsible for this phenomenon.

First, the Dominions were settled mainly by discontented Britons. Admittedly Australia was the only colony to begin with British misfits as such, but the labourers and impoverished gentlemen who packed themselves, families and household belongings in crazy little ships to sail thousands of miles across the oceans to these colonies during last century, did not make the effort just for the fun of it. As Mr. J. A. Lee remarks in his otherwise difficult book on New Zealand socialism, the pioneers were “an adventurous and free-spirited people, many of whom were forced out of Great Britain by the harsh economic conditions prevailing after the Napoleonic Wars, many of whom had been driven from Ireland and Scotland by an exacting landlordism, and in New Zealand they found themselves free from enslaving political tradition.”¹

These remarks apply equally to Australia and Canada, and in part to South Africa, countries that have been populated by people who found England unsatisfactory, and who possessed the supreme courage to make an irrevocable break.

When they arrived in the new lands of their choice,

¹ *Socialism in New Zealand*, by J. A. Lee, M.P. (London, 1938).

these hardy social dissenters, they did their utmost to ensure that English abuses should not land with them. Amid the hardships and mortifications, spiritual and physical, of agricultural pioneering, they stoutly proclaimed their personal independence and collective equality. Representatives of all those Victorian social classes, so well-defined and mutually exclusive at home, here worked together side by side. Since in most cases the price of land was the labour necessary to clear it, there was small opportunity for one section of the community to obtain a monopoly of possession.

Even when such an opportunity did arise, as in the case of the Australian squatters, the resulting semi-aristocratic class received little deference from the rest, and very soon special laws were passed to emasculate their tyranny. It should be noted, however, that Australia owes the development of the main-prop of her prosperity to those self-same squatters, and it is very doubtful whether she would have emerged from ignominy without strong hands to guide her.

During the nineties of last century a Liberal-Labour Government effectively sealed the doom of the great pastoral estates in New Zealand by introducing legislation to purchase compulsorily and subdivide such holdings. Then a special land tax was introduced whose "principal virtue was deemed to lie in its equitable graduation, designed to make impossible the great holdings of land which were the main feature of a pastoral economy."¹

Coincidentally gold discoveries brought a second instalment of dissatisfied but hardy adventurers; and finally modern assisted emigration schemes introduced

¹ *New Zealand: A Short History*, by Dr. J. C. Beaglehole (London, Allen & Unwin, 1936).

shipload after shipload of poor but sanguine artisans to leaven the mass.

First, their manner of colonization created the Dominions as we know them to-day. But second—and this is a generally disregarded factor—the actual climate and environment of Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand have influenced the human beings settled there.

Canada with its great plains, high mountain barriers and extreme continental climate; Australia with its fertile seaboard against arid interiors, and its dry, warm climate; South Africa with its illimitable veldt and dusty mountains, its climate of peculiar extremes; New Zealand with its sea-girt mountainous islands and Mediterranean climate—these climatic environments have been found to have their effect. Already there is as much difference between an Australian and a New Zealander as between a Londoner and a Yorkshireman. The Australian tends to be lean, nervous, energetic and self-assertive, whereas the New Zealander by contrast is generally thick-set, phlegmatic and undemonstrative.

Slim young women are reducing frantically after a few years' residence in New Zealand, and weedy young men are proudly displaying their biceps. Red-hot radicals from Glasgow have thrown away their ideologies and are enthusiastically engaged in organizing co-operative dairy factories. East End Jews are swaggering, sun-burnt minor potentates. The world has changed for these wondering immigrants, and a good deal of the credit for that metamorphosis must be assigned to the extreme fertility of a lovely, empty land and its kindly, temperate climate.

But I can adduce yet another partial explanation of the differing idiom of life in the Dominions, perhaps

proceeding directly from the environmental reason. Although these countries have all suffered the extreme hardships of a pioneering period, they have never had to scratch for a living, and consequently have never known real, European poverty.

The Dominions in which I was particularly interested, Australia and New Zealand, have from the first found a ready market for their characteristic products, a market that has continually expanded; and to-day their material standards of living are among the highest in the world. Admittedly these countries possess few ducal mansions, but neither do they contain European slums.

As the Labour Government of New Zealand has been able to initiate its social reforms during the last four years without financial difficulty, thanks to rising prices for New Zealand's vital export products during those years, so have the Dominions as a whole flourished socially during their short history, thanks to their sheltered economic and political position.

Attached firmly to the apron-strings of a wealthy and secure Britain, but not inheriting that country's class traditions and large population, they have been able to develop a type of society that already differs from that of Britain in many important respects.

3

Manner of settlement, environment and economic circumstances have modified the British race in the Dominions. Thus a casual English visitor to, say, New Zealand is astounded to find small farmers delivering their cream to dairy factories in the backs of expensive

saloon motor cars, and office-boys sitting on the corners of their employers' desks of a Monday morning to discuss the Saturday afternoon sporting results. In the same way an Englishman in Australia cannot believe his ears when a workman seated opposite him in a railway compartment needs no introduction to begin an animated one-way conversation on the subject of the exchange equalization fund.

The doctrinaire socialist's first impression of New Zealand society is that here members of his race have created the very conditions for themselves that reformers had always envisaged so vainly for England. Upon stepping ashore in Sydney the visitor finds not only that the crowds in the streets are as smart and fast-moving as the London crowds—almost—but also notices at once that most individuals have a well-cared-for air that is confined to the London West End.

Yet there are few, white faces and fewer rags. The main buildings of the business centre are as imposing as those of London but infinitely cleaner. Every second car is a gigantic six-cylinder limousine. Even journalists and schoolmasters, not to mention dustmen, have the appearance of individuals who can afford their hot shower-baths every morning and at least two new suits a year.

Perhaps these points are trivial. I wonder? Every fairy-tale of Hans Andersen has a profound moral, yet each is concerned with small details of everyday life, a suit of clothes, an ugly duckling, a dead horse, a pea. Is it very difficult to find significance in the curious fact that New Zealanders always pay more attention to their front gardens than their back, whereas Englishmen of a similar type rarely bother about the front garden at all?

One young colonial who visited London was perturbed to find that members of the Imperial Parliament were not provided with desks, as were members in the Dominions, and had to sit on benches, "taking notes as best as they could." Does not that remark convey as much to the sensitive student of politics as a tome of unadulterated ideology?

It is necessary to take careful cognizance of these overseas trends, for the simple reason that otherwise one is apt to be dangerously deceived by appearances. There are Labour Parties and Conservative Parties in the Dominions, but none of these bear more than superficial resemblance to the English groups of the same name. Conservatives in the homeland prize a centuries-old tradition, but they have wider minds with the passing of each troubled year. Similarly British Socialists have behind them the influence of long generations of underground machination, and few of their intellectual leaders have been able to escape the virus of academic theory.

But the overseas Conservative more often than not comes down to breakfast in his shirt-sleeves; his father or grandfather was inevitably a pioneer, that is to say, a working man; and if he fights Labour now, it is only because he has made a little money and wants to keep it. Similarly the Labour man is a well-fed individual, completely bereft of a social philosophy in the academic sense, but anxious to secure power over his fellow men as the Conservative is chary of losing it. Dicey referred thirty years ago to the *socialisme sans doctrines* of New Zealand, and the description still holds good for the Dominions generally.

If these examples of the difference in idiom between life in Britain and her Dominions are fully appreciated,

then it should be easier to understand political trends overseas, and, in particular, the attitude of overseas governments towards foreign affairs.

From their sheltered economic and political positions, conscious of their own democratic success and inheriting a burning desire for social justice and equality, the Dominions, whether ruled by governments of the Right or Left, tend to take an over-simplified view of international relations. Perhaps the classic example of this was Australia's plan for a Pacific Peace Pact a few years ago. A month or so after this was promulgated Japan renewed her invasion of China.

New Zealand's Labour Government has repeatedly declared that she will support the League of Nations through thick and thin, and a few years ago she openly opposed Great Britain at Geneva on the question of sanctions against Italy. Yet New Zealand is the most defenceless country of its size in the world, and could contribute little towards punishing an aggressor: the onus of that task would rest on—Britain's shoulders. Thus our own self-styled intellectuals, often imbued exclusively with hypocritical principles of intellectual behaviour, urge us on the one hand to fight for Spain, or China, or Russia, and on the other hand declare their firm intention of never fighting. But I am wandering from the point to get my own back on some friends, and that is not the purpose of this book.

4

Personally I would like to prescribe a complete tour of the British Empire as an essential qualification for political preferment in this country. As I have tried

to indicate in a limited space, historical, geographical and economic conditions of their society have tended to make inhabitants of the Dominions different. They realize this themselves. When they go to England and live there, young colonials of the third generation are often bitterly disappointed. It is a hard thing for an Englishman to be in their company during those initial weeks. He feels confronted with something that is more poignantly foreign, because subtly so, than the most outlandish European visitor or most strident-voiced schoolmarm from Cincinnati, Ohio. He tries to explain why the legal fraternity of London prefer to pass their working days in offices that would not be used in the Dominions for any finer purposes than rabbit-skinning, but they can't understand.

The colonial in England has no niche; he comes from a land where there are only two classes at the last analysis, the moderately rich and the moderately poor, and he cannot understand that England has several classes with extremes at either end. If poor he is humbled; if rich he is insulted. With two thousand a year he can move among the "best people" of a colonial city; thirty thousand pounds would not necessarily admit him to the real British aristocracy. So the colonial returns to his true home thankful that he is not as other men are.

But there is no necessity to worry about this development, provided it is studied and always taken into consideration. A sensible parent is not perturbed when his children display signs of character, especially if those signs are in themselves admirable. He would be an obtuse observer who would decry the independent spirit, love of social justice and absence of class consciousness of the overseas Briton just because those traits sometimes conflict with his own sense of inter-

national decorum or political wisdom. Fortunately the faults of the colonial, his self-assertiveness, love of display and lack of social finesse are both innocuous in themselves and far outweighed by his virtues.

I repeat again, however, that inhabitants of the homeland must take this matter seriously. It may be a hopeful sign that Englishmen have recently begun to acknowledge the presence in the world of other races than the Anglo-Saxon, with other traits and other viewpoints. A realization that other peoples have not only different ways, but also fundamentally different outlooks, has been slowly forced upon us by events; and perhaps we shall soon, as a result, take a more realistic view of foreign, or perhaps it should now be said, foreigners' affairs.

Unfortunately the Dominions are so superficially similar to us that it is difficult to take this matter seriously. I am afraid that most Englishmen still tend to think of the Dominions in terms of North-West Mounted Police, bushrangers, Maoris and South African farms. How many Englishmen realize that New Zealand is larger than England, Scotland and Wales put together, but that Eire has twice its population? Or that Australian coal miners recently struck in an unsuccessful effort to obtain a five-day, 30-hour week, holidays with full pay and pensions at 60? Or that less than 50 per cent of modern Canadians derive from British stock?

Not many, I am afraid, from inquiries made during the last three years; and therefore I have deliberately written this chapter in the hope of slightly widening the home-dwelling Briton's Imperial vista. We are often ashamed to use the term Imperialism, but that is because we still connect it with an outmoded, outworn

conception of a British Empire that is no longer, and, for that matter, never has been in existence. I want to spread pride and confidence in the new, vital and concrete British Empire that is our only hope and strength.

An Empire Prepared

I

My initial contention was that insufficient attention had been paid to the defensive problems of the British Dominions and Colonies at a time when such problems had assumed a new importance. Accordingly I have endeavoured to supply a brief account of those problems and of the individual defence forces of the overseas Empire. It now remains to summarize my principal findings.

The first significant point to emerge was that old alignments of policy had been thrown out of perspective by events, so that discussion of the contemporary situation would necessarily be speculative. It is easy to mention a Rome-Berlin Axis, a Mediterranean policy, a Singapore-Darwin line, but arguments based on such concepts might be disproved at the first declaration of war. The science of high strategy might almost be defined as a dangerous species of gambling in futures. When most traditional lines of policy have been abruptly erased, new allegiances have been swiftly formed and old frontiers have disappeared over night, then it is hardly possible to do more than state facts and hope for the best.

But it was shown from the beginning that the British Empire had suddenly been presented with several new problems of defence, notably the potential hostility of a Great Power in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and

Africa; the truculence of another Power in the Far East and the Pacific; the extension of the danger zone over certain remote British areas by means of accelerated transport, chiefly air; and the difficulty of protecting these vulnerable remote units, also protracted trade routes across all the seven seas, with a Royal Navy and Royal Air Force that might, under modern, untried conditions of totalitarian warfare, have their hands more than filled elsewhere.

The fact that the Dominions themselves had at last attained a full realization of these problems, particularly such as exposed their individual vulnerability, was stated as a significant introduction to an account of the military evolution of those territories; the original colonization by unsatisfied, adventurous people who underwent hardship willingly; the sheltered growth of the most democratic and most individualistic societies this world had ever known behind the broad back of an invincible nineteenth-century John Bull; the effect of agricultural and social pioneering on the bodies and minds of later waves of carefully selected immigrants.

The various little wars that enabled these precocious children to test their half-formed strength were next described. It was shown how Canada collaborated with the Imperial forces from the beginning—how, indeed, she was born on an Imperial battlefield; how South Africa underwent her unfortunate but in the long run salutary baptism of fire; how New Zealand took ten years to learn that the only way to conquer the Maoris was to enter the bush and fight like nature's gentlemen; how Australia had to endure a bad beginning, several gold-rushes and conditions of settlement that would have beaten a weaker people in the first round, but only succeeded in producing the Australian

character, and the remarkable Australian contribution to Empire wars.

Thereafter it was shown how pride took a fall at the Boer fence, but reasserted itself noisily if uneasily during the threatening Edwardian years, when certain Dominions did make a determined effort to prepare for the worst by means of compulsory military training, and collaboration in methods of drill and types of equipment with the Imperial forces. The growing fear of Germany, even in the remotest outpost of Empire, the tour of Lord Kitchener and the stimulation of a new kind of Imperial patriotism, were adduced as symptoms of an unparalleled situation in the history of the British people.

Then the story moved to 1914, when overseas Britain spontaneously surged forward to the support of the Mother Country. It was shown how the Dominions and Colonies gave unstintingly of their best in blood, gold and supplies of war. The exploits of Canada in Flanders, Australia in France, Egypt, New Guinea and Gallipoli, South Africa in Africa and France, New Zealand in France, Egypt, Samoa and Gallipoli, and India, Ireland and the Colonies in mud and gory glory were described and assessed for their military value; while attention was drawn to the increased share taken by the children in the actual governance and direction of the Imperial effort by means of transmitted public opinion, the presence of overseas statesmen in the War Cabinet, and the behaviour of the overseas troops in England and the field.

Then it was shown how the Dominions emerged from that cataclysm with a cubit to their stature, a further buttress to national pride, and a blind conviction, shared equally with the Mother Country, that their deeds would serve them well for at least another hundred years. Waterloo, Versailles, Geneva, Munich—

During recent anxious months the world has been busily counting its guns and potential gun-fodder. The imminence of general conflagration has forced everyone to the grisly stocktaking, not least in Great Britain, with its far-flung lines of communication and wide responsibilities. Strangely enough, however, very little attention has been paid to the position and the military potentialities of the Empire overseas, should world-wide hostilities ensue.

This may have been due to the remoteness of the Dominions from the Mother Country, or perhaps to the preoccupation of the British people with matters of domestic preparation and the progress of the European negotiations. Yet a survey of overseas military potentialities would undoubtedly have had a heartening effect upon the uneasy home-dwellers. A summary of the successive chapters in this book dealing with the actual defence forces of the Dominions to-day, presented with some comparative facts and figures relating to the position of those Dominions in 1914, may usefully illustrate this point.

For instance, the strength of the Canadian permanent forces at the outbreak of the Great War was 3,000. The non-permanent forces had an establishment of about 75,000. By 1918 approximately 600,000 Canadians, exclusive of air and naval men, had enlisted to fight. But at the time of writing, Canada has a permanent militia of potentially 10,000 and a non-permanent force of potentially 100,000. To-day the Canadian Air Force, non-existent in 1914, has a personnel of about 3,500 and nearly 400 modern aircraft. Four destroyers were purchased recently to raise the Canadian naval comple-

ment to six, and several modern minesweepers are being constructed. Facilities have been extended to the British Government for the manufacture of reserve aircraft in Canada. For military purposes alone, the 1938 Canadian Defence Estimates provided nearly 19,000,000 dollars, as compared with only 12,000,000 the previous year, and it is expected that the 1939 estimates will show a further large increase.

Great Britain obtained men, foodstuffs and raw materials from her Dominions during the Great War, but in return she had to supply these young countries with munitions and manufactures. Since then, however, the Dominions have advanced a long way towards industrial self-sufficiency, and some of them have established flourishing munitions factories. Recent Australian developments are particularly significant. During the Great War this Dominion enlisted 412,953 soldiers and 3,856 sailors, a total of 416,809, nearly one-twelfth of the population. Of these, 331,781 were sent to Europe for active service, and 318,000 suffered some form of casualty. Consider that remarkable percentage! Moreover, the total cost to young Australia of that war was approximately £270,000,000.

To-day this Dominion, the true outpost of British culture in the Pacific, has a permanent defence organization providing for a field army of seven divisions. The militia has an establishment of 70,000, and a reserve of 50,000 trained men is being built up, so that Australia would be able to make an initial call on 120,000 men in the event of an emergency. This year the Dominion is spending over £17,000,000 on defence, compared with £3,000,000 in 1932. Moreover, when the Australian Air Force reaches its full strength of eighteen squadrons it will be the strongest overseas air

weapon in the Empire, while Canberra will become one of the strongest airports.

Not only has Australia's population increased by one-third since 1914, but the Dominion has developed large manufacturing industries in the last quarter of a century. Therefore it has been possible recently to establish several big munitions factories, and the latest project is the creation of plants to produce emergency and additional supplies of military aircraft on behalf of the British Government. In the words of one observer, Australia is now "second only to Britain in the Empire in the possession of facilities for the manufacture of war materials." Australian naval plans include modernization of ships, an ambitious coastal defence organization and a scheme to make Darwin in the Northern Territory a strongly fortified base to collaborate with Singapore.

Similarly South Africa is making a big feature of naval preparedness, and at present is laying down fortifications at Capetown which, it is claimed, will make this port a "Heliogoland of the South." Twenty-five years ago South Africa sent 136,070 white and 92,837 coloured troops overseas, but the Defence Minister has recently declared that 137,000 troops and 1,000 pilots could now be mobilized at a moment's notice, while conscription would bring a further 150,000 men under arms. Thousands of natives would be available for labour service. The South African Government decided to spend an additional £6,000,000 on defence during 1938-39; is constructing certain munitions factories; and has laid plans for a large air force.

New Zealand, smallest and remotest of the Dominions, sent 98,950 men to the Great War, and many thousands more were ready before the end. To-day this Dominion has military defence forces of approximately 500 officers

and 8,000 other ranks, capable of immediate expansion. There are also expanding naval and air forces. The New Zealand spirit was demonstrated last year, when two thousand applications were received in less than a fortnight for twelve short-term service commissions in the Royal Air Force.

Indeed, I feel that the survey offered in this book shows that the British Dominions to-day are better prepared than they were in 1914 and that, what is still more important, they have immeasurably greater defence potentialities. Quarter of a century ago they were very youthful and largely dependent on Great Britain. To-day the Dominions are far more self-reliant and correspondingly stronger. Also they are producing much larger quantities of the foodstuffs and raw materials needed by Britain, and in an emergency could extend production far beyond present margins.

Therefore the Empire can rejoice that it is, to a certain extent, strong within its own house.

3

But a study such as that presented in this book would have small value if it merely exalted the *status quo*. It is a chief fault of our race that we refuse to admit the possibility of tragedy until the time has passed when that tragedy can be entirely averted; and we do like to feel that all's right with the world even when we are past believing that God's in His heaven. It must be pointed out that an overwhelming body of evidence has been adduced in this book to support the original contention that certain problems of overseas defence have been largely neglected.

No wonder foreigners scratch their heads over Great Britain's success as a colonizing power. From the beginning we have neglected our Colonies. We have supplied them lavishly with commercial travellers, missionaries and long-term credits, but have we ever made a determined attempt to weld them into a homogeneous unit? When such men as Chamberlain and Rhodes have practised what the textbooks preach, their only reward has been slander and obloquy. We feel that because they have courage where we only possess half-hearted convictions, then they must necessarily be mountebanks and dangerous to follow. One moment we realize that at all costs our position in the world must be maintained and our export industries extended; the next moment we suffer peculiar pangs of conscience or funk about our right to maintain our position in the world at the expense of other people, and we suffer an unworthy shame at the very thought of our beastly export industries.

Indeed, we are very like the old-fashioned tradesman who infuriated his neighbours by pretending that his business was merely a hobby, whereas in reality he drove as hard a bargain as any. We are slightly ashamed of the methods by which Drake, Raleigh, Clive, Hastings, Phillip, Wellesley, Wakefield, Raffles, Gordon, Chamberlain, Rhodes, Milner, Lawrence and the redoubtable others made this blood-stained Empire, but we are glad enough to receive our Imperial dividends or drink our Imperial tea or eat our Imperial bread and butter. We like to laugh at Colonel Blimp, but do not reflect that we owe this satisfaction to the business enterprise of Lord Beaverbrook. Perhaps it is the worst of having such a mixed ancestry, Saxon and Celt, Danish, Norman-French, Cavalier and Roundhead,

Scottish, Irish, Welsh. The emotionalism of the Celt intervenes just at the wrong moment to interrupt the good work being done by the hardheadedness of the Saxon. The wit of the Irish destroys the solemnity of the Scot. He who proclaims himself an Empire-builder by his deeds alone must be laughed out of court by those whose derisive words are their only deeds.

London to-day is lousy with parasites who would theoretically have the British renounce their possessions, and who are to be found in practice to be the chief beneficiaries from those possessions. These decadents gnaw sadistically at the breast that feeds them because it is the most extravagant and extraordinary thing they can do.

Therefore we have had some nasty escapes during our half-hearted Imperial progress. The Boer War was prolonged, over-expensive and humiliating just because we had not taken the trouble to consolidate our position in Africa years before. We had ample warning of the Great War, but were largely unprepared overseas when it began, so that colonial campaigns were uncomfortably protracted, and overseas contingents unready to co-operate at once in major operations. Afterwards we resumed our lazy habits and allowed the entire machine so arduously built up during that war to rust and disintegrate, so that we had to start practically from scratch again when we found strong enemies once more arrayed against us. Actually those enemies would not have been strong at all if we had only conducted our foreign affairs with reasonable intelligence, and actively worked to create a permanent front out of the fine but temporary structure erected during that war.

To-day we are spending millions annually on our fighting forces and defence systems, but not a penny on

a unified scheme of Imperial defence. The parts of the Empire are becoming strong, but there is no strength at all in the verbal, unofficial, intangible, elastic and invisible links connecting those parts. We all expect that in event of war the parts would automatically act together, and they would act together, but they would hardly act in unison together unless by sheer fluke. Doubtless we would contrive by Herculean effort and unnecessary loss of life and money to muddle through. But why should we have to muddle through? Why can't we have a plan?

The Dominions are stronger to-day than in 1914, and we have at least built Singapore, while the scheme for manufacturing warplanes in Canada and Australia is excellent. The Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force are steadily recovering their old strength and prestige. But all this is insufficient. Undoubtedly a man is wanted to inspire the peoples and governments of each country in the Empire with enthusiasm and determination, to rally them together and override petty objections and subsidiary interests, only our race carefully withholds facilities from heroes until the hour of direct need. At the present juncture there seems to be no hope of such a man, a Marlborough, a Nelson, a Wellington, a Lawrence. Therefore existing machinery must be quickly extended.

4

How do you think the British Dominions would act if a large-scale war broke out to-morrow and Great Britain were forced to take part?

I do not refer to the question of whether the Dominions would come to the assistance of the Mother

Country. I think my survey has shown that even the most independent and fortunately-circumstanced Dominions, Canada and South Africa, would be compelled in the nature of things to fight. I am speaking of the *method* of co-operation between the Dominions and the Mother Country in another war. My simple complaint is that no effective machinery appears to exist for such co-operation to be both instantaneous and efficient.

The question might seem unimportant beside the hot topics of European policy. But that is just why it is so important. Hitherto it has been neglected or allowed to slide. It is vaguely assumed that another war would inevitably find the Dominions fighting doggedly at the side of Britain as in the Great War. But nobody gives a thought to the *method* of co-operation.

To-day the Dominions are entirely responsible for their own local defence. Britain is responsible for their wider safety. This means that Australia prepares to tackle any invaders of her shores, while Britain makes certain that no invaders will ever reach Australia's shores. That is the present theory of Imperial defence. It has minor corollaries. Dominions such as Australia and Canada are now manufacturing those military aircraft for Imperial use. South Africa allows the Royal Navy to use the Simonstown, and Canada the Halifax and Esquimalt bases.

Then that aforementioned body, the Overseas Defence Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, regularly meets in Whitehall to discuss and amplify decisions on defence matters reached at the occasional Imperial Conferences. But the Dominions in open conference are always careful of committing themselves, and the Committee probably spends most of its time devising specious formulae that will offend nobody.

Then there are the various measures of technical co-ordination between the forces of Britain and the Dominions. Training methods and equipment are kept fairly uniform. Officers are exchanged. But—and this is a big “but”—with the exception of that aforementioned Committee of Committees of Committees, there is nothing in this world-wide Empire of ours that remotely resembles a common, unifying brain.

I said there was no doubt about the participation of the Dominions in another war. This did not signify that all the Dominions are willing in time of so-called peace or near-war to acknowledge their full liability. These are young countries that must stand up for their adult rights if they are to attain full adult status. Naturally they refuse to commit themselves when asked at Imperial Conferences to formulate a definite Imperial defence plan—if they are asked.

Yet each Dominion has future centuries of sheltered development to lose if the British Empire were defeated in a war. So it is scarcely imaginable that any Dominion would refuse to co-operate if invited at point-blank and in a manly, sensible way to lay all its defence cards on the table.

The scheme I envisage would embrace the entire Empire. It would assign duties to the various units of the Empire, and prepare for united action on every front. But it need not imply that the Dominions would have to follow out the scheme in event of war. Freedom of action could be reserved. The Dominions need not feel that they would be committing themselves. They would merely be taking care that if they did have to participate, then their efforts would not be wasted. I believe that it would not be difficult to convince the Dominions of the necessity of such a plan. This confi-

dence was acquired during my residence overseas, when I listened to the common man and learnt to disregard the conventional utterances of the careful politicians. But even the politicians, as I have described in a previous chapter, have lately thrown conventional caution to the totalitarian winds.

Many of us are tired of hearing members of the British Government reiterate that each Dominion is independently responsible for its defence policy. Politicians are notoriously behind the times in their interpretation of public opinion. They are ever fearful of giving offence. It was all very well to be careful of treading on the overseas corns when there was no imminent danger of war, and it was necessary to preserve the notion of the Dominions' complete independence.

But nowadays nobody is independent, and the Dominions are old enough to be told so. The nations depend upon each other to a degree unknown in the past, and the subversive action of one may betray all the others. Co-operation is the only safeguard. The spectacle of a world-wide British Empire, possessed of every resource, inspired by a common sentiment, arming feverishly in all directions against highly probable attack, but without a unifying, central brain, is a spectacle scarcely to be endured.

• That is the lesson of this otherwise inadequate book. The individual defences of the overseas Empire are admirable in themselves, and the efforts that are being made to improve them still further must have all recognition and praise. But the whole picture is spoilt by that basic lack of strategic unity.

Admittedly it is possible that the innermost recesses of Whitehall may contain the secret outline of a remarkable plan; that all along the Committee of

Imperial Defence may have been negotiating with the Dominions and Colonies to effect a measure of secret liaison that would immediately become open and effective in event of war. But such a backstairs effort would exist on paper only, and the Empire as a whole would be publicly unprepared for it.

An analogy may be drawn between this ridiculous situation and the position of the passive defence services in Britain during the last year. Many people have hesitated to volunteer because they have not been sure: (1) whether they were wanted; (2) whether they would be able to get training if they did volunteer; and (3) whether they could safely hazard their valuable time in what might only prove to be the same old muddle.

I am convinced that a call to the Dominions and Colonies would meet with an immediate response, but it would have to be a definite, unequivocal, clarion call.

And then the fortress would be quite impregnable.

Appendix

Citizen Service at the Antipodes

I

The chief argument against compulsory training for defence purposes is that the British people would never submit to such a system in times of so-called peace. It is argued that the British people have got so used to shifting the responsibility for defence on to others that no British Government would have the temerity to offend their susceptibilities by suggesting compulsory service. Defeatists of this complexion may be usefully referred to the history of compulsory training for defence purposes in Australia and New Zealand.

These countries are British to the core. They have been described as more British than the British. They were settled by the sturdiest representatives of our race, who emigrated to free themselves from the shackling social conventions and economic tyrannies of nineteenth-century English life. Have you ever met an Australian or a New Zealander who does not prize individual liberty of action above any other social attribute?

Yet, thirty years ago, these proud young nations adopted systems of compulsory and universal training for defence which remained in operation successfully for two decades, and which were sponsored in the first place by *Radical Governments*.

Admittedly the Australasian systems bore no resemblance at all to systems of continental conscription for military training. At the most they involved organized physical culture for boys and elementary military drill and instruction for young men, occupying only an hour or so each week. They taught youngsters how to keep fit, how to obey

orders, and, in the later stages, how to hold a modern rifle. That was all.

But the proved results of this training were a marked improvement in the physical and moral welfare of Australasian youth, coupled with the ability to respond at once to the danger call. Beardless youths from the Antipodes were performing unequalled feats of valour on the hills of Gallipoli and the fields of Flanders while adult Englishmen were still wrestling with baffled drill instructors on Salisbury Plain.

And the sole motive that made this success possible, that made Labour join with Conservative in supporting and initiating the system, that made Australians and New Zealanders of every type enthusiastic about it, was the fear of invasion and consequent loss of that dearest human prize, individual liberty.

When the victory of 1918 had seemed to remove that fear, and men's minds were suddenly occupied with another great problem, economic depression, Australia and New Zealand temporarily suspended their systems of national training. Grave financial stress was the principal motive, there is absolutely no doubt about that.

But the significant point is that Australia and New Zealand were sensible enough to swallow their pride and adopt compulsory service when the occasion demanded it, and Australians and New Zealanders, perhaps greater lovers of individual liberty than any other people, were proud to acquiesce.

The point is laboured here because the present position of Great Britain closely resembles that of Australia and New Zealand in 1910. At the time of the Napoleonic Wars we expected to be invaded, but we have never really *feared* invasion since the sixteenth century, when we first discovered that an island kingdom could be successfully protected by a strong navy. We have never really feared invasion—until the rise of air-power during recent years.

This phenomenon has largely undermined our impreg-

nable strategic position. Our Navy may constitute a ring of steel around our white cliffs. Our Army may mass itself hundreds deep around our green shores. But the thousands of military aircraft possessed by our nearly potential enemies may fly above those forces with impunity. They may penetrate through mists, clouds and darkness to the very heart of this tight little land. They may slaughter our people indiscriminately, destroy our homes and factories, and even land marauders cunningly in the rear of our defences. Possibilities based on happenings in other theatres of war, Spain, China, Abyssinia are bad enough, but these may be multiplied and extended tremendously under the drive of a world conflict. There's nothing like a war to bring out the worst in your enemy. So we are really in danger of invasion. We are dangerously exposed to invasion for the first time in three hundred years.

Accordingly it is felt by increasing numbers of people in this country that the voluntary system as applied to national service is inadequate to meet the very dangerous defence situation. These earnest people feel strongly—it is no use mincing words—that compulsory registration of all available man-power, followed by a measure of defence training for all, however unpleasant in principle, is urgently necessary if we are to resist the overwhelming forces massed against us.

Unfortunately, there is such a prejudice against anything of the kind that it may be impossible to enlist public opinion until it is too late. The man in the street, reliant upon newspapers and hearsay for his information, is invariably several months behind the official times in his estimate of the precise public danger. Moreover, the Englishman in the street has always been encouraged to "leave it to Whitehall," or "leave it to the Army," or "leave it to the Navy," or even to "leave it to the man next-door." Indeed, we have come to prize our freedom from responsibility so much that very soon we may be deprived entirely both of our sense of responsibility and our freedom.

This is not scare-mongering. It would be impossible to raise a panic in this country by talking of the risks and consequences of war. The British public is never scared of military danger—only of the liability to be deprived of personal freedom by military service.

The point is that freedom may be altogether lost in the long run if it is not partially circumscribed in the short run. Compulsory national service to-day may be a far better thing than compulsory regimentation by some world dictator in the future.

Therefore I am appending to this book the following detailed account of the Australasian systems of national service. In the chapters on Australia and New Zealand I have described how that system came into being. Here are the full details—for those in search of practical precedents.

2

It was generally acknowledged at the time that compulsory military training was established in Australia as the direct outcome, to quote an official statement, "of a feeling existing in a large majority of the citizens of the community that Australia was insecure under the voluntary system."

Prior to the institution of compulsory military training, all male inhabitants, under the Defence Acts of 1903 and 1904, had been liable to serve in Australia with the defence forces "in time of war." The simple effect of the famous Act of 1909 was to make training compulsory "in time of peace."

This Act legalized for the first time in any British community the principle of universal liability to be trained in peace-time.

Briefly, the Act prescribed junior cadet training for all lads from 12 to 13 years of age, followed by senior cadet training from 14 to 18 years of age, and thereafter adult training for two years in the citizen forces, to equal 16

days annually, followed by registration (or a muster parade) every year for six years.

Arrangements for registration, enrolment, inspection and medical examination of persons liable to be trained were made accordingly. Later Acts introduced various modifications. For instance, adult service was extended to eight years. The scheme was officially established on January 1, 1911.

It should be noted that the whole system was largely based on recommendations made by Lord Kitchener after his visit to Australia by invitation of the Commonwealth Government in 1909. Conversely, Kitchener profited by the experience gained during these investigations, and probably remembered Australia when he initiated his recruiting campaign during the Great War.

The Australian system began with the callow schoolboy. This *Junior Cadet Training*, as originally instituted, comprised 90 hours a year, beginning on the 1st July of the year in which the trainee reached the age of 12. The course was aimed at "developing the cadet's physique," and therefore consisted principally of physical training—for at least 15 minutes on each school day—and elementary marching drill. The following subjects were taught in addition: Miniature rifle shooting; swimming; running exercises, in organized games; first aid; and (in schools in naval training areas) mariner's compass and elementary signalling.

The Junior Cadets were not organized as military bodies, nor did they wear uniform. The Commonwealth Government maintained a staff of special instructors of physical training, who held classes for school teachers in all districts throughout the country. The school teachers imparted instruction to the boys in their turn.

Senior Cadet Training, which lasted for four years, began on the 1st July of the year in which the trainee reached 14 years of age. It consisted of 40 drills each year, of which four were classed as whole days of not less than four hours, 12 as half-days of not less than two hours, the remainder being night

drills of not less than one hour. The minimum efficient service required of Senior Cadets was invariably 64 hours per annum, a minimum of 36 hours of which was to be done, if necessary, in the employer's time. Registration of every male born in 1894, or subsequently, and who had resided for six months in the Commonwealth, had to be effected in the first two months of the calendar year in which he completed his 14th year.

The four years Senior Cadet Training covered "the foundation work necessary for service in any arm." It comprised marching, handling of arms, musketry, physical drill, first-aid, guards and sentries, tactical training as a company in elementary field work, and elementary battalion drill. Discipline was strongly inculcated. Senior Cadets were not required to attend camp.

Schools containing at least sixty Senior Cadets might form separate units, and might arrange their parades to suit school time-tables, but battalion parades had to be attended.

Training in the *Citizen Forces* lasted for eight years, begun on the 1st July of the year in which the soldier reached the age of 18 years. Except in the last year of this service (when only one registration muster was necessary in normal peace-time) the work consisted of continuous training in camp for 17 days in the case of the naval forces, artillery and engineer arms, and eight days for other arms, with eight days, or equivalent home training for all arms. The total service was thus 25 days per annum for the specialist and technical corps, and 16 days per annum for other corps, the main body of which were light horse and infantry.

The home training, total eight days, was divided into whole days, half-days and nights, the respective minimum durations of these being six, three and one and a half hours, two half-days or four nights counting as a whole day.

Allotment to Arms.—As regards this, trainees to the number required were first allotted to the naval forces. There was no allotment during Senior Cadet Training

to particular branches of the military service. Upon transfer to the Citizen Forces, cadets with special educational or technical qualifications were drafted as recruits to one or other of the specialist or departmental corps to the required number; the bulk went to infantry. All other arms, except Light Horse, were maintained by annual quotas transferred from the Senior Cadets, as laid down in the annual establishments. In the Light Horse, enrolment was not compulsory, since each recruit was required to provide his own horse; and while every encouragement was given to eligible trainees to enrol, voluntary enlistment by those not liable to compulsory service was practised for several years.

Persons who were forbidden by the doctrines of their religion to bear arms were, as far as possible, allotted to non-combatant duties, as stretcher-bearers in infantry companies, or as members of the Army Medical Corps.

Exemptions.—Status, condition, employment, or place of abode could exempt from service. In time of war, under the system, exemptions would be as follows: Aliens and non-Europeans, the medically unfit, members and officers of the Commonwealth and State parliaments; judges and police magistrates; clergymen and theological students; police and prison officials; lighthouse-keepers; medical men and nurses in public hospitals; and persons having conscientious objections to bearing arms. Medical men, non-Europeans, and conscientious objectors were not exempt from non-combatant duties.

Exemptions in time of peace were: Medically unfit; aliens; non-Europeans; school-teachers qualified as instructors of drill; members of the permanent naval or military forces. Theological students might be exempted from training. To meet the case of districts where the population was sparse and scattered, and where undue hardship would otherwise have resulted, exemptions from training in time of peace might be extended by proclamation.

The burden of proving exemption rested on the person claiming it, a final appeal lying to the civil courts. Any

person convicted by a court of a disgraceful or infamous crime, or who was of a notoriously bad character, was permanently disqualified.

Penalties for Prevention or Evasion.—Employers, parents, and guardians might not, under a heavy penalty, prevent or attempt to prevent any employee, son, or ward, who was a trainee, from rendering service; nor might any employer penalize or prejudice any employee in his employment or attempt to do so because of the latter's service or liability for service; and the employer was compelled to pay the Senior Cadet's wages for the time he was away from work for the purposes of training.

A heavy penalty was enacted for evasion of service as required under the Act by those liable to serve. Penalties took the form of money fine, or detention in military custody under enforced training and discipline. Non-efficient had to attend additional training for each year they were non-efficient. Evasion rendered the person evading or failing to serve ineligible for employment of any kind in the Commonwealth Public Service.

Children's Courts were used where possible for the prosecution of Cadets under the age of sixteen years.

Efficiency.—Each trainee had to be efficient in each year. Parades as ordered had to be attended, and a standard of efficiency, based on the number of years' training and the work performed, had to be attained. Parades were classed as compulsory, alternative and voluntary. The former were made up of the exact amount of training required, and might not be missed without leaves being formally given. Alternative drills were appointed for those absent with leave from compulsory parades, and were allowed to count for pay and efficiency. Voluntary parades were held for those desiring further proficiency, and for candidates for promotion. Any trainee failing to qualify as efficient in any year had to do an extra year's training for each failure. Thus, there had to be twelve annual entries of efficiency or exemption in each soldier's record before he could receive his

discharge—four as a Senior Cadet, and eight as a Citizen Soldier.

Pay.—Trainees received 3s. per day during the first year, and 4s. per day during the subsequent years of their training. Higher ranks were paid higher rates. For corporals the daily pay was 9s., for sergeants 10s., for sergeant-majors 10s. 6d., and 11s. Light Horse trainees received in addition £4 per annum for keep of horse. In the commissioned ranks the daily rates of pay were 15s. for lieutenants, 22s. 6d. for captains, 30s. for majors, 37s. 6d. for lieutenant-colonels and 45s. for colonels.

Uniform and Equipment.—The uniform was simple and inexpensive, but suitable. It was free, and the principal articles were issuable every second year. The clothing was of universal pattern, and, beyond distinguishing corps' badges and a coloured hat-band, there was no distinction (except rank marks). Uniform was worn on all parades and drills, but its wearing was forbidden when not on military duty. Rifles and free ammunition were provided. Citizen Soldiers had their rifles on issue, but arms for Senior Cadets were stored in local depots, and were issued as required for drill and musketry. An allowance of free ammunition was made to commanders of units to encourage rifle shooting. The uniform issued to each Citizen Soldier was such as to enable him to parade with jacket, breeches, hat, cap, puttees or leggings, military boots and kit-bag.

3

"It is claimed that the scheme, both before its inception and since its successful inauguration, has had the support of leading statesmen of all political views, as well as the majority of the citizens of the Commonwealth." Thus contended an official statement made in Australia in 1912. A slight amount of opposition had been manifested, the statement went on, and this was "principally from shirkers."

A few people had opposed military service on religious grounds, but "the prosecutions and penalties for evasions, etc., though not wholly," were "mainly operative against shirkers."

In general the trainees were alert and well-disciplined on parade; while the interests and enthusiasm of the lads was shown by the large number who sought promotion at competitive examinations after courses of lectures, special parades and demonstrations. Another evidence of enthusiasm was the fact that the applications for enrolment in the technical arms, where the total service required was greatest, was invariably in excess of the requirements of those arms. Further, a great deal of voluntary work was done in all branches of the service, and the rifle clubs of the citizen units were well patronized. Most of the regiments had athletic, gymnastic and swimming clubs.

Patriotic citizens contributed generously to funds for establishing bands, regimental clubs, annual sports gatherings. "A marked improvement became apparent in the general conduct and bearing of the youth of Australia, and it was claimed that this was the effect of the system of universal training."

As a result of inquiries, the police authorities of all States concurred that the behaviour of the youths who were subject to training was "vastly improved." It was stated that both mentally and morally, as well as physically, the benefits were "very definite," and that "the principal effects of a beneficial nature are increased self-respect, diminution of juvenile cigarette smoking and 'larrikinism,' and generally a tendency towards a sense of responsibility and a desire to become good citizens."

It only remains to be added, as a completion of the official picture, that the International Conference held at Washington on November 11, 1921, resulted in a decision by the Australian Government in 1922 that the universal training law be continued, but its operation restricted to the more populous centres and to certain quotas only. From July 1,

1922, to June 30, 1925, training in the Senior Cadets was limited to two quotas instead of four, and in the Citizen Forces to two quotas instead of seven.

After July 1, 1925, Senior Cadet Training was reduced to one quota only, while Citizen Force Training was increased to three quotas. At the end of the scheme Senior Cadet Training began on July 1st of the year in which the cadet reached the age of 17 years, and on July 1st of the following year he was allotted to the Citizen Forces, in which training continued until June 30th of the year in which the trainee attained the age of 21. Notwithstanding these reductions in training, the liability to register at the age of 14, and to serve for the full period prescribed by the Defence Act remained. Junior Cadet Training was in abeyance during the years 1922-23 and 1923-24, but was resumed as from July 1, 1924.

The conditions remained in force until November 1, 1929, when all compulsory obligations under the Defence Act were suspended, and the reconstitution of the forces on a basis of voluntary enlistment was brought into operation. At June 30, 1929, 80,114 were in training in the Citizen Forces, and 117,077 in the Senior Cadets.

4

It is unnecessary to describe the New Zealand system in similar detail. The scheme was based on the Australian system and on parallel recommendations by Lord Kitchener. The Defence Act of 1909 and subsequent amendments provided that all male inhabitants who had resided in New Zealand for six months and were British subjects, would be liable to be trained as follows:

- (i) From 14 to 17 years of age in the Senior Cadets (a period of four years).
- (ii) From 18 to 24 years of age in the Territorial Force (a period of seven years).

(iii) From 25 to 29 years of age in the Territorial Force Reserve (a period of five years).

The original regulations for the statutory amount of service required for each individual annually were as follows:

For the Territorial Force 30 drills each of one and a half hours' continuous instruction; 12 half-day parades, each of three hours, or six whole-day parades, each of six hours' continuous instruction; a prescribed course of musketry; and seven days' annual training in camp (exclusive of days of arrival and departure). Mounted rifles and country companies of infantry whose difficulties as regards attendance at drills were greater than those of town units, were permitted to go to camp for four extra days (eleven altogether) in place of an equivalent number of drills and parades; moreover, the scale was convertible and interchangeable, and there was no objection to drills and parades being "lumped" together, under regimental arrangements, into week-end camps or in any other way.

The Senior Cadets had to do 50 drills each of one hour's duration, six half-day parades and a prescribed course of musketry.

Writing about the system in 1913, three years after he had been appointed the first Commandant, Major-General A. J. Godley, now Sir Alexander Godley, declared that "an excellent spirit pervades all ranks, and, as a rule, the personal service required is given cheerfully and ungrudgingly. Picture-shows and other diversions are a counter-attraction to the evening drill in the towns, but on the whole, the town youth is not found too reluctant to give them up for one night in the week. . . . All young men belong to it, rich and poor, high and low, with no distinction of class or occupation, and all are treated alike. Commissions are obtainable only through the ranks or by competitive examination, both written and practical, and in the future I believe that the best brains so obtained from all classes of the community will render the New Zealand

citizen officer capable of leading and instructing his men, and so doing justice to the splendid material of which the New Zealand Citizen Army is undoubtedly composed."

After the Great War the period of liability for training was reduced, and since October 1, 1930, the compulsory provisions of the Defence Act have not been enforced. If the Government so directed, these could be brought into operation again without further legislation.

INDEX•

- Aden, 131-132
- Aircraft, manufacture in the Dominions, 221 et seq.
- Air Forces of the Dominions, 48, 51, 67 et seq., 72 et seq., 97 et seq., 106 et seq., 250 et seq.
- Airlines, 158-159
- American War of Independence, 27
- Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 17, 59, 123, 139
- Arms of the Dominions, 44, 48, 52, 54, 55, 65 et seq., 72 et seq., 97 et seq., 106 et seq., 250 et seq.
- Army, British Regular, 170 et seq.
- Australia, position in event of war, 18; military history, 31 et seq.; in Great War, 48 et seq.; defence position to-day, 72 et seq.; communications, 156; part in Imperial strategy, 191 et seq.; reactions to recent crises, 204, 207, 208-209, 213-214; manufacture of military aircraft, 221 et seq.; squatters, 238; climate and temperament, 239; Sydney crowds, 241; résumé of defence strength, 251-252; citizen service, 261 et seq.
- Barbados, 25
- Bases, defensive, 179 et seq.
- Basutoland, 129
- Bechuanaland, 129
- Bermuda, 182
- Blockade, 164
- British Guiana, 134
- British North Borneo, 20, 134
- Burma, 20
- Cameroons, 94
- Canada, in event of war, 18; military history, 25 et seq.; in Great War, 44 et seq.; strength to-day, 56 et seq.; part in Imperial strategy, 188 et seq.; interest in Pacific defence, 197; reaction to crises, 204, 206, 208, 210-211; relations with United States of America, 218; manufacture of military aircraft, 221 et seq.; résumé of present defence strength, 250-251
- Cape Horn route, 158
- Cape route, 157, 182
- Cardwell system, 171-172
- Cartagena, 26
- Ceylon, 132
- Citizen service, 261 et seq.
- Colonial Empire, armed strength, 122 et seq.
- Committee of Imperial Defence, 199 et seq., 257 et seq.
- Convoy system, 162-163
- Cyprus, 135
- Czecho-Slovakian crises, 203 et seq.

- Darwin, 183
- Dominions, growth of foreign policy, 21 et seq., 215 et seq., 234 et seq.
- East Africa, 126-128
- Egypt, 124-125
- Eire, in event of war, 19; present military strength, 147 et seq.; place in Imperial strategy, 191
- Esquimalt, 183
- Federated Malay States, 20, 134
- Fiji, 134
- Food supplies, 152-153
- France, 27, 45 et seq., 57, 233
- Gambia, 25, 128
- George V, King-Emperor's Message to Empire in Great War, 212 et seq.
- Germany, 16, 17, 40 et seq., 94, 140, 160 et seq., 204 et seq., 220
- Gibraltar, 135
- Gilbert and Ellice Islands, 134
- Great War, 17, 40 et seq.
- Hainan Island, 162
- Halifax, N.S., 182
- Hong Kong, 20, 133, 162
- India, position in a future war, 19-20; present strength and problems, 137 et seq.; ports, 156; "little wars," 173 et seq.; recent increase in establishments, 178-179; part in Imperial strategy, 191; reactions to recent crises, 207
- Italy, 17, 19, 95, 122, 124-125, 128, 154, 161, 220
- Jamaica, 135
- Japan, 17, 20, 59, 117-118, 123, 133, 139, 161, 162, 169, 197-198, 209, 220
- Johore, 134
- Kenya, 126-127
- Louisbourg, 26
- Malta, 135
- Maori Wars, 32, 35-36
- Mauritius, 134
- Mediterranean problems, 17, 153-154, 157
- Merchant shipping, 152 et seq.
- Munitions, 191-192, 221 et seq.
- Navies of the Dominions, 49, 52, 66 et seq., 72 et seq., 97 et seq., 106 et seq., 250 et seq.
- New England, 25, 26
- Newfoundland, 25, 135
- New Guinea, 20, 134
- New Zealand, present dangers, 18-19; military history, 34 et seq.; in the Great War, 53 et seq.; current rearmament, 106 et seq.; part in Imperial strategy, 193 et seq.; reactions to recent crises, 205, 206-207, 210, 213-214; manufacture of military aircraft, 231-232; pioneers, 237; climate and temperament, 239; Labour Government, 240, 243; résumé of defence position, 252-253; citizen service, 271 et seq.

Nigeria, 26, 28, 129
 North Atlantic seaway, 157
 Northern Rhodesia, 129
 Nova Scotia, 26, 182

Pacific, co-operation in defence,
 119-120, 193 et seq.

Pacific Islands, 20

Palestine and Transjordan, 131,
 185

Panama route, 158

Papua, 87, 134

Penang Island, 182

Quebec, 29

Red River campaign, 29

Robben Island, 98, 183

Royal Air Force, 187, 221 et
 seq.

Royal Navy, relation to Canada,
 58, 61; to Australia, 76-77;
 to South Africa, 94, 98; to
 New Zealand, 110-111, 112,
 119; to Colonial Empire,
 123; Trincomalee base, 132;
 India, 140; submarine men-
 ace, 160 et seq.; recent
 expansion, 164 et seq.

Samoa, 134

Sarawak, 134

Seychelles, 134

Sierra Leone, 128

Simonstown, 94, 182

Singapore, 20, 76, 132-133,
 162, 180-181

Solomon Islands, 20, 134

Somaliland, 126

South Africa, present responsi-
 bilities, 19; defence history,
 36-37; in Great War, 54-55;
 present strength, 94 et seq.;
 in South-West Africa, 129;
 place in Empire strategy,
 190-191; reactions to recent
 crises, 204-206, 209-210,
 211 et seq.; climate and
 temperament, 239; summary
 of present strength, 252

South African War, 30-31, 33-
 34, 36-37

Southern Rhodesia, 129-130

Straits Settlements, 134

Strategy, Imperial, 186 et seq.,
 232 et seq., 256 et seq.

Sudan, 124 et seq.

Suez Canal, 17, 153-154, 156

Swaziland, 129

Tanganyika, 94, 126

Territorial Army, 185

Togoland, 94

Trade routes, 152 et seq.

Trincomalee, 132, 182

Turner Valley Oil Fields, 189

Unfederated Malay States, 134

United States of America, 16,
 18, 25, 27, 28, 44, 57 et seq.,
 158, 169, 188-189, 197, 224,
 229

Virginia, 25, 26

West Africa, 128-129

West Indies, 20, 25, 134



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